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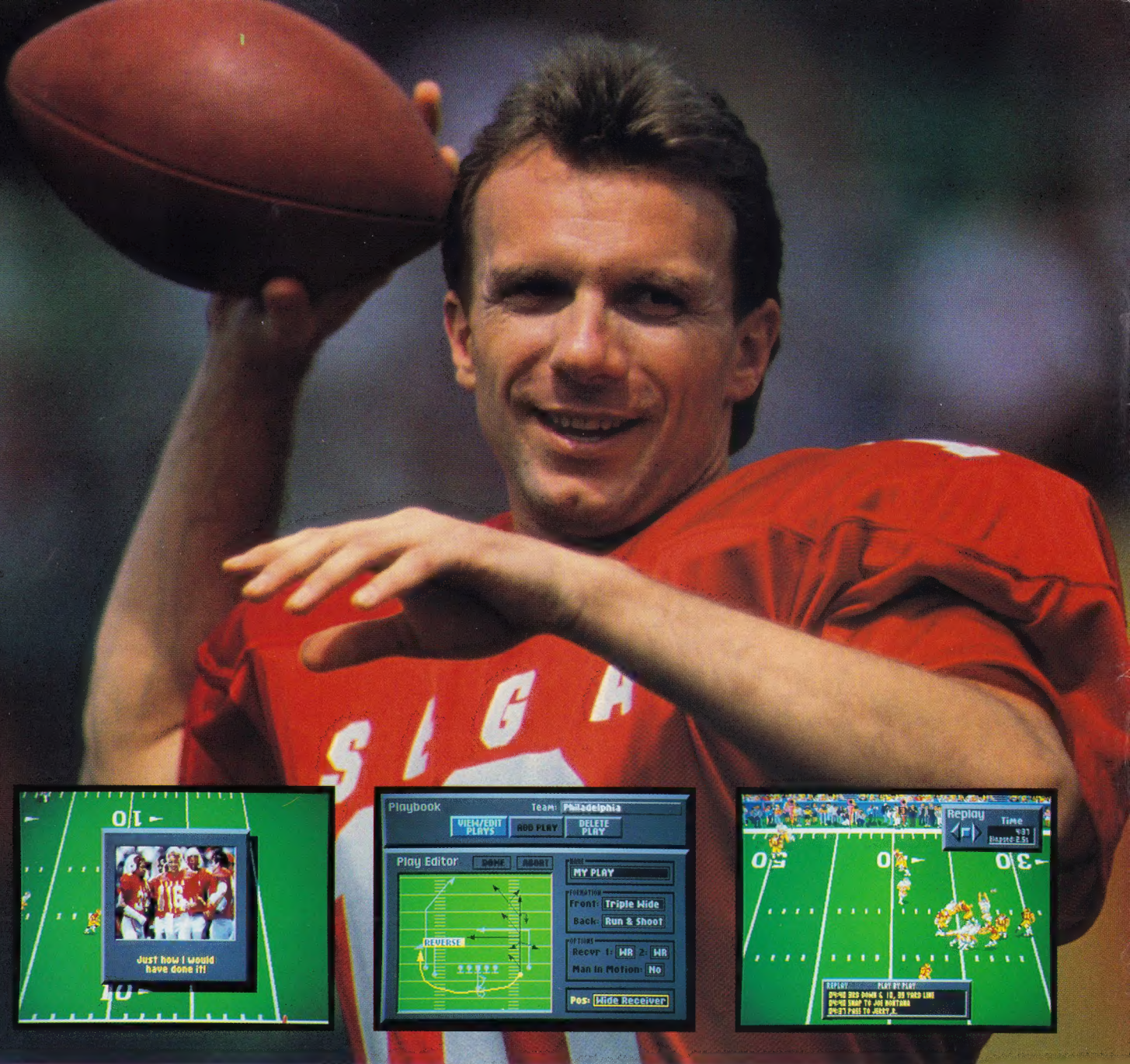
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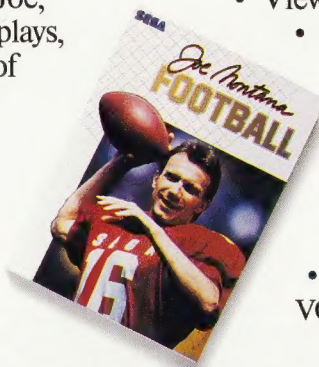




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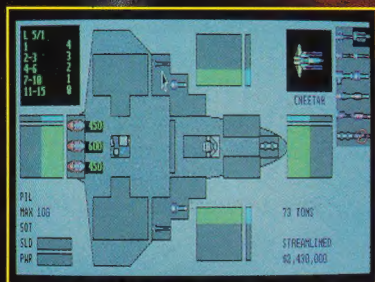
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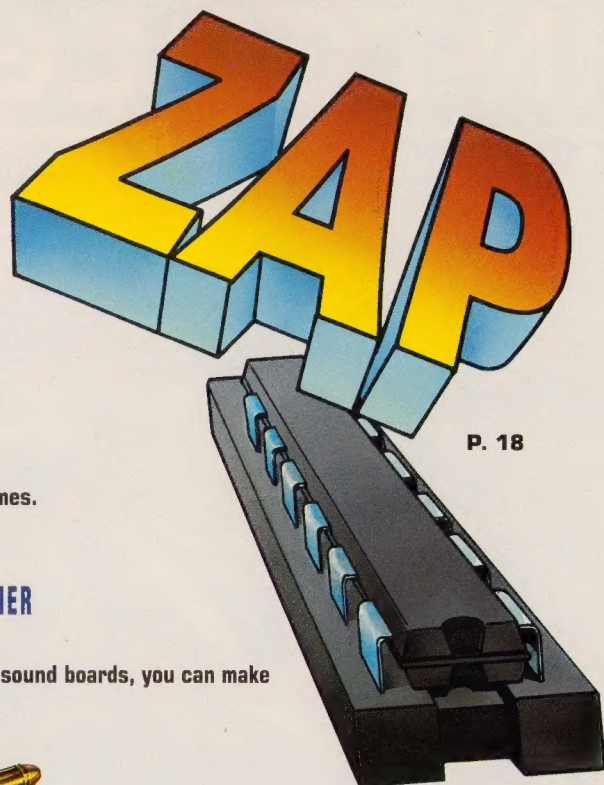
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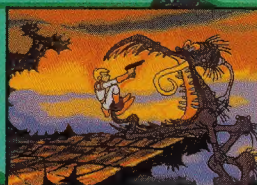
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EDITOR'S PAGE

THE FORGOTTEN SENSE

The sound that comes out of your PC when you play a game is kind of like snap, crackle, pop sprinkled with some nuts and bolts. Although most games' graphics images are delightfully realistic, their sound is simply annoying.

If you've finally grown tired of hearing mechanical Rice Krispies, you can do something about it. Check out any of the sound boards we're evaluating in this issue and surround yourself in music (See "Breaking the Sound Barrier," p. 18.) With one of these boards in your machine, you'll no longer need to put up with those measly little pops and clicks as your missiles explode or your golf balls shoot down the fairway.

You play games to have fun, right? In my book, you can't have a lot of fun playing a game unless the experience feels realistic. Even though your fighter-jet simulation's cockpit display and animations are so realistic they make you lose your lunch, you'll be grounded instantly if your missile launch sounds more like someone cracking his knuckles.

With all the beautiful high-resolution monitors available these days, and with all the game companies hiring modern-day Rembrandts to design stunning graphics displays, it seems that hearing has been the forgotten sense. It's high time to remember.

Give one or more of these sound boards an audition, decide which one fits your needs and your budget best, and retire that tin-can speaker that came with your computer. If you're serious about your entertainment, don't leave out your ears. Lousy sound is going the way of silent movies.

Some of the games we look at in this issue are proof that you shouldn't forget your sense of hearing. Give a listen to just about anything from Sierra, for instance — a company that has always been known for its cinematic musical scores. Codename: Iceman is no exception. (See "Eyes Only" in this issue, p. 29.)

And the sound effects featured in California Dreams' Tunnels of Armageddon (Reviews, p. 60) definitely make this game more exciting. Piloting an antigravity hyperglider through a maze of tunnels filled with laser-wielding robots and clanging portals is as much an auditory as a visual experience. But again, the sound you'll hear will only be as good as your hardware.

Pick up some recent game packaging and you'll see that sound is becoming more of an issue with developers these days. On labels usually plastered with memory requirements, graphics modes, and methods of operation, you'll probably find mention of supporting sound boards, too, now. The graphics screens may be great and the animation may be amazing, but for the richest game experience, don't forget your sense of hearing.

— Lafe Low,
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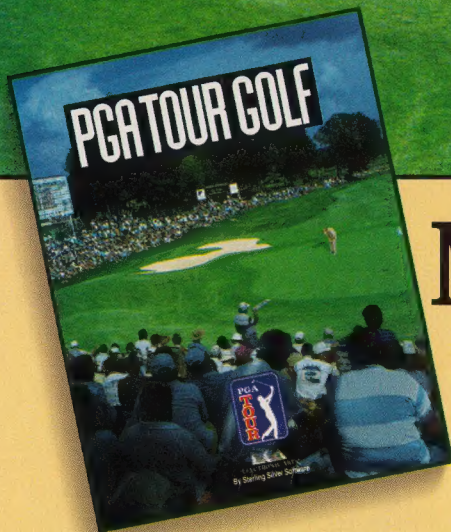
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MAILBAG

Software Regrets

After all the delays, Accolade finally released its long-awaited aerial-combat simulator *Strike Aces: International Bombing Competition*. I purchased a copy eagerly, but now I wish I had kept my hard-earned cash.

Despite the game's excellent graphics, animation, and concept, *Strike Aces* is one of the most ill-behaved simulators I've ever had the misfortune of flying. (And I've flown a few.) Although the manual states you can use the joystick to make menu selections, it doesn't work.

If you want to use the joystick for flying, forget it — joystick control is too erratic. While trying to fly straight and level, my plane went into a spiral and wouldn't respond to the stick, forcing me to exit to the DOS prompt. Even though I followed Accolade's troubleshooting instructions to the letter, and I tried the game on several different computers, I had no luck.

Not only was I disappointed with the game's quality, but I was shocked at the company's inclusion of a racist term: It named one of the missions *Spearchucker*. Racism has no place anywhere, including the computer industry. Accolade should produce a product that works the first time around and leave the bigotry to crackpot hate groups.

Barry S. Little
45 Fairfield Place
West Caldwell, NJ 07006

The Only Solution

After reading your April 1990 editorial "Don't Copy, Be Happy" (p. 8), I'd like to share some of my views regarding software piracy. In Mexico there's a limited supply of entertainment software. Moreover,

these games are even more expensive here than in the United States. Not many people can afford to buy their own games, so they turn to copying to get quality products at a low cost.

Although I don't like any form of copy protection (I've lost two of my favorite games because I couldn't make backup copies), at present it's the only solution. Advertisers bombard gamers with claims of the newest and most exciting software, yet most of us don't have the money to buy them all at retail price.

Also, I want to ask your advice. What is the best computer setup for entertainment and home use? (I'm not interested in Nintendo.) I own a PC XT, but I'd like to buy a new computer as well as a VGA board and a sound card. Is the LAPC-1 compatible with the MT-32? Will the Ad Lib card run with a VGA board?

Mauricio Gutiérrez
Puente 39
Tardines del Sur
Mexico D.F. 16050
Mexico

Choosing the best entertainment system depends on how much you're willing to spend and what sorts of games you want to play. Our advice is to buy the fastest machine you can afford. Shop around, and find a good deal on a 286- or 386-based machine. These machines are fast enough for most entertainment and home titles.

If you're purchasing a system mainly to play games, you should go for full VGA graphics. You'll want to pick up a sound board, too. (See this issue's feature "Breaking the Sound Barrier," p. 18, for more information).

The LAPC-1 is compatible with the MT-32. According to Roland, the boards' tone generation is "functionally equivalent," so games that support the MT-32 also support the LAPC-1.

You shouldn't have any problem using an Ad Lib card with a VGA system. You'll need them both and they'll work together just fine. — eds.

Tee Off

In your April 1990 column "Prognosticator" (p. 62), you mention that Sculptured Software will release a new add-on for Accolade's *Jack Nicklaus Golf*. Will you give me that address so I can order this product?

Frank Hipkins
Main Street
Alton
Ontario L0N 1A0
Canada

This add-on is actually the latest in the Jack Nicklaus series. See our September/October 1990 feature titled "Tee Time," (p. 32) for our review of Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf and Course Design. Sculptured Software is the game's development group; to order this product contact Accolade at 550 South Winchester Boulevard, Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95128 (408) 985-1700. — eds.

Driven Crazy

I recently bought *Champions of Krynn*, Strategic Simulations' new *Dungeons & Dragons* game, because I'd been happy with another of the company's games, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*. Although *Champions of Krynn* was supposed to be an improved version of the previous game, it doesn't run on computers with both 3.5- and 5.25-inch drives.

Because I was stationed with the U.S. Navy in London, England — 80 miles from the store where I purchased the game — I couldn't take it back. The S.S.I. support personnel didn't have any helpful

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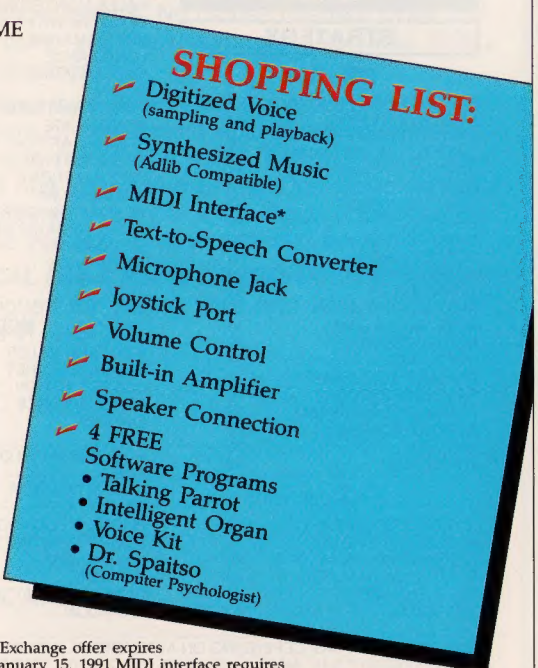
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advice either: They merely told me to return the game and get a set of 5.25-inch disks.

Determined to make this game work, I studied Curse of the Azure Bonds and discovered that the command *makenewa* copied files to a 5.25-inch disk. Using the copy command on Champions of Krynn, I copied the files GAME.OVR, START.EXE, RANDCOM.DAX, DUNGCOM.DAX, COMSPR.DAX, SKY.DAX, and KRYNN.CFG successfully to my 5.25-inch disk. After two months I've almost completed the game and haven't had a problem.

The next time Strategic Simulations creates another Dungeons & Dragons game, it should keep mixed-drive gamers in mind. If the company improves some areas of the game, it shouldn't regress in others. At the very least, while the company brags about a game's improvements, it should warn us of the game's shortcomings.

Ralph G. Rogers
FOCCEUR Box 12
FPO New York, NY 09510

Civil War

Has any company designed a PC-based strategy game that covers the entire American Civil War? The games I've found encompass only individual battles.

Gerry Lekas
621 Long Road
Glenview, IL 60025

The Decisive Battles of the Civil War series by Strategic Studies Group follows the war through individual battles, but with the complete set you can experience the entire war. See September's feature "The Time Machine" (p. 18) for more information. — eds.

Help!

I really enjoy reading your magazine because it's informative and entertaining. Could you give me some suggestions on getting past the ghost in Prince of Persia? I've tried countless

times to get by him in the 12th level, but each time I die. In your next issue, how about giving your readers some tips on Future Wars' difficult stages?

Chris L. Haswell
620 South Johnson #4
Iowa city, Iowa 52240

When you encounter your shadowy alter ego in Prince of Persia, you can't beat him in a sword battle. Every time you hit the ghost, you hurt yourself as well. Try putting aside your hostile intent and "sheath" your anger. (After all, Broderbund means "brotherhood" in Swedish.)

Keep your eye on our new strategy column, "Playing the Game," for tips on Future Wars and many other titles. — eds.

If you have comments, questions, or suggestions, write and let us know what you're thinking. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity, style, and space. Address your correspondence to Mailbag, PCGames, 80 Elm Street, Peterborough, NH 03458.

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THE GAME PRESERVE

The Latest Word on Fun and Games

START YOUR ENGINES

First came Accolade's **Test Drive** (San Jose, CA), which featured five fabulously expensive high-performance cars and a five-leg journey up twisting mountain roads. Next was **Test Drive II: The Duel**, offering head-to-head competition and treks through the desert, woods, and mountains in a limited-edition Ferrari F-40 or Porsche 959.

Well, you ain't seen — or driven — nothing yet. **Test Drive III: The Passion** (\$59.95) lets you unleash the horsepower of three prototype automobiles — the Chevrolet CERV III, the Pinnafarina Mythos, and the Lamborghini Diablo. Unless you're a regular on the auto-show circuit, these are cars you'll probably never even see in real life, let alone drive.

Test Drive III's road system offers a variety of ways to get from here to there, so you can indulge your passion for exploration, too. You can even take your prototype speedster off-road driving, but naturally you won't be able to go quite as fast.

As in any drive through the country, it's eventually going to get dark and the weather is inevitably going to turn bad. This game provides headlights and wipers for those situations.

An instant-replay option and a car-chase perspective



Test Drive III: The Passion

add to the fun. If you make a spectacular maneuver or have a hellacious crash, you can replay it as often as you want from any angle. The variable-viewpoint option allows you to view the action as if you were in a helicopter — that is, you can zoom in or out, up or down, and left or right.

Because Test Drive III: The Passion's overall design is different from either of the previous games, the add-on disks for The Duel won't work with Test Drive III. Accolade plans to release an add-on disk with additional cars and roads shortly after Test Drive III ships.

Tom Loughry, who also designed Accolade's Steel Thunder and Gunboat, is the creative force behind Test Drive III. In the third Test Drive, Loughry uses the same type of polygon-fill animation and bit-mapped graphics as he did in his military simulations. Digitized photographs of the automobiles' dashboards provide an intense sense of realism. — L.L.

LIGHTS OUT

Who comes to mind when you think of late-night horror movies? Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, of course. If you haven't gotten enough of the salacious horror-show hostess, you can now see her on your computer screen.

Accolade has signed an agreement with Horror Soft



Elvira

to publish and distribute **Elvira, Mistress of the Dark** (\$60–\$65). In the game, you search the nooks and crannies of a creepy

castle for a series of six keys, which you'll need to keep Elvira's relative, Queen Emelda, from returning from the grave.

Emelda's hordes of sinister servants have already made their way out to "prepare" this dimension for her arrival. As you wander the castle, you'll need to fend off a variety of ghouls and beasts.

Even after you find all the keys, you're not in the clear. You'll have to find the chest that houses the Scroll of Spiritual Mastery and figure out how to use all six keys in precise order. The scroll is what Emelda needs for immortality and the power to rule the world. The scroll will also tell you how to defeat Emelda, so you'd better find it first, or you're in for a family visit you won't soon forget. — L.L.

HELP ON THE WAY

If you're still searching for the king in Accolade's recent graphics adventure, you'll be happy to hear that there's now a hint book to go along with Search for the King. For \$12.95, you can order the *Official Search for the King Cluebook* directly from Accolade at (800) 245-7744. A cluebook for **Altered Destiny** should also be available by the time you read this.

Accolade has also started up a 900 help-line number for those two titles. If you're

J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Lord of the Rings™

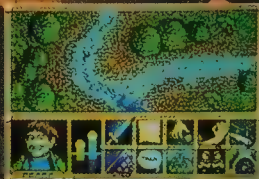
Vol. I

Experience the Excitement and Wonder of Tolkien's Middle Earth!

"Interplay's newest role-player tackles the Tolkien trilogy with top-flight graphics, sound and a new play system that should make adventuring in Middle Earth more realistic than ever before."

—Video Games & Computer Entertainment

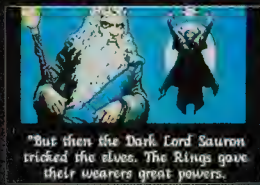
Interplay Productions presents the first role-playing computer game encompassing the epic fantasy world of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth. Players journey through a world inhabited by hobbits, elves, dwarves, wizards, falling in and out of the clutches of wolves, wargs, trolls, orcs and ghosts, all the while protecting the one true ring from falling into the



IBM screens pictured.

clutches of the evil Lord Sauron and his Dark Riders.

"Resplendent graphics and loving attention to the Tolkien lore prove that in The Lord of the Rings, Interplay is out to



"But then the Dark Lord Sauron tricked the elves. The Rings gave their wearers great powers."

forge one ring game to rule them all!"

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The Lord of the Rings, Vol. I uses stunning full screen, top-down, 256 color VGA graphics, smooth four directional scrolling, digitized sound, an easy to use point-and-click icon interface, and an off-line paragraph system to bring the depth of the true Tolkien experience to life via the computer.

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—Info Magazine

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To order The Lord Of the Rings, Vol. I, call 1-800-969-GAME. Available on MS-DOS for \$54.95. Amiga coming soon.

The program is published with the cooperation of the Tolkien Estate and their publishers, George Allen & Unwin (publishers) Ltd. The plot of The Lord of the Rings, the characters of the hobbits, and the other characters from The Lord of the Rings are © George Allen & Unwin Publishers Ltd. 1966-1974 1977-1981 © 1990 Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. MS-DOS is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

stuck somewhere, call (900) 990-HINT. It'll cost you 85 cents for the first minute and 60 cents for each additional minute.

Still not enough help? You can call for hints or answers to any questions relating to Accolade games by dialing its new bulletin board at (408) 296-8800. The settings are for 300, 1200, or 2400 baud, 8 data bits, no parity, one stop bit.

— L.L.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

Stellar 7 was first introduced in July of 1983, and became something of a cult classic as a shoot-'em-up game. The new and improved edition brings the arcade experience to new and higher levels. Dynamix (Eugene, OR) has added 256-color digitized graphics and a variety of additional sound effects.

You command an intergalactic battle tank charged with clearing off alien hordes from seven worlds in an attempt to save Earth. The enhanced animations, graphics, and sound add tremendous depth to what was already an impressive arcade-action game.

Stellar 7 was the first PC title from Dynamix. Now take a long look at its latest version (\$34.95) and you'll have a good idea of how far things have come in the world of MS-DOS gaming.



Stellar 7

WAR AND MAH-JONGG

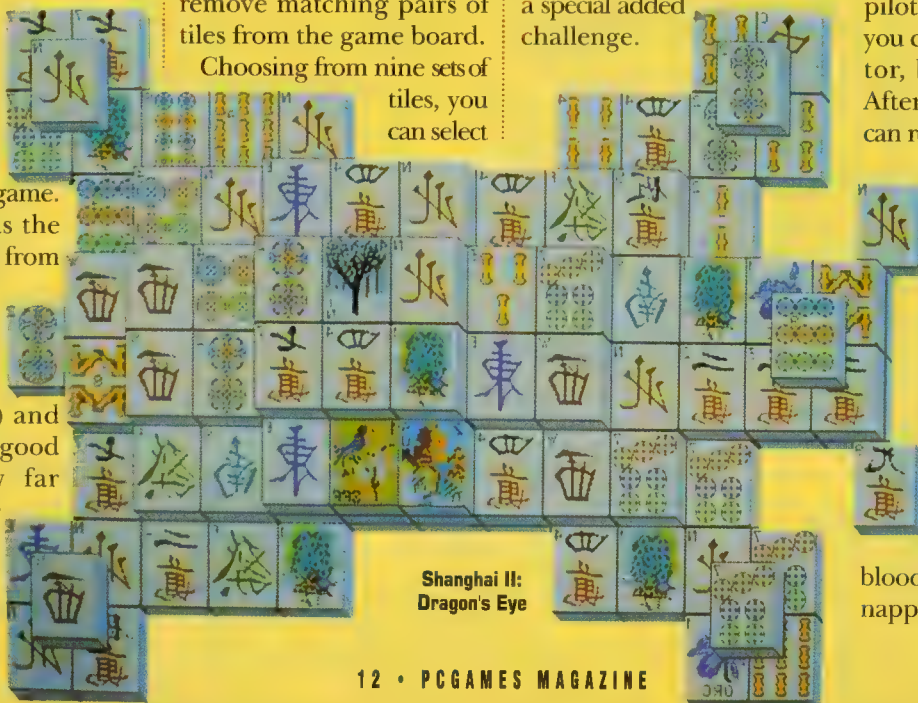
Activision's (Mountain View, CA) fall lineup should satisfy just about anyone — strategy aficionados, simulation nuts, and graphics-adventure gamers. Activision's trio of games for this season includes Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye, F-14 Tomcat, and Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Revenge (an Infocom title).

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye (\$49.95) promises to be as challenging and addicting as the original Shanghai. Based on the ancient oriental game of mah-jongg, the object is still to remove matching pairs of tiles from the game board.

Choosing from nine sets of tiles, you can select

tiles such as the traditional set featured in the original game or a set resembling a deck of cards. Every one is rendered beautifully in crisp VGA graphics. You can also design your own tile set with the Tile Construction Set and design your own tile layouts with the Tile Editor.

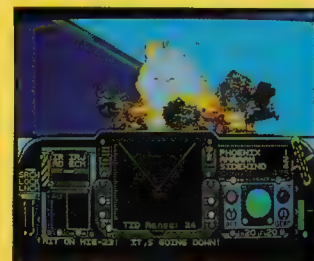
Shanghai II offers 12 different layouts for the game, all taken from the Chinese calendar. At the end of each game, providing you clear the board, you'll see an animated picture of a particular animal. The layouts increase in difficulty for a special added challenge.



Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

After a relaxing game of Shanghai II, climb into the cockpit of an F-14 fighter jet. **F-14 Tomcat** (\$49.95) lets you pilot the Navy's most popular and successful combat aircraft. You'll start off flying missions from aircraft carriers in any number of locations.

You'll be armed to the teeth. Depending on the nature of your mission, your

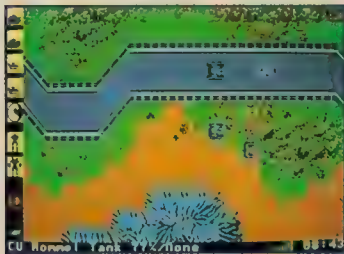


F-14 Tomcat

F-14 may be carrying Sidewinder, Sparrow, and Phoenix missiles. Once you've established yourself as a top fighter pilot, you'll earn a trip to the Naval Fighter Weapons School at Miramar Air Base, more commonly known as the Navy's Top Gun school. There you'll "dogfight" with nine of the Navy's top pilots. Beat these guys and you can retire as an instructor, but it won't be easy. After each encounter, you can review and analyze your performance on a highlight film.

Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Revenge (\$49.95) continues the story line established in the first title, Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception. In this science-fiction combat strategy game, you're Jason Youngblood searching for your kidnapped father. Once you've

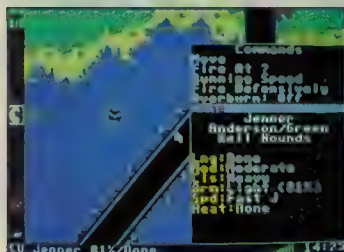
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found him, you'll have to defend the Inner Sphere of the five Successor States from the Clans.

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Battletech:

The Crescent Hawk's Revenge

futuristic BattleMechs — giant cybernetic tanks armed with all types of firepower. Battletech features 256-color graphics, detailed scenes of the characters and situations, and digitized speech from the BattleMechs to alert you in combat. More than 20 scenarios and a nonlinear plot make for multiple outcomes and hours of play. — L.L.

CONQUEST OF CAMELOT CORRECTION

The designer of Sierra On-Line's (Coarsegold, CA) **Conquest of Camelot: The Search for the Holy Grail** (\$59.95) has informed us of a minor correction in the game's point system.

The total number of points available under *Skill* is listed as 368. The correct number is 362. The *Wisdom* and *Soul* points are correct as shown in the game.

Christy Marx, the game's designer, also encourages players to write in with comments on the game — what you like or don't like, and what you'd like to see in future titles. Address your correspondence to Christy c/o Sierra On-Line, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA

93614. Letters addressed to her will be forwarded. Letters requesting hints will go to Sierra's customer service department. — L.L.

THE COMICS COME ALIVE

The comic strip *Buck Rogers* first appeared in 1929. Now, more than 60 years later, you can play the first Buck Rogers science-fiction role-playing computer game from Strategic Simulations Incorporated (S.S.I.) (Sunnyvale, CA). A cluebook is available for \$12.95.

In **Countdown to Doomsday** (\$49.95), you find yourself in the year 2456. The Russo-American Mercantile (RAM) has a powerful grip on the entire solar system. It's your job to lead the New



Countdown to Doomsday

Earth Organization (NEO) in putting an end to RAM's vicious monopoly.

You'll have to put together a team of pilots and warriors from all the solar system's races — Martians, Venusians, Mercurians, and, of course, a few Terrans. Your team will grow in strength and skill as you explore the solar system.

S.S.I. is also working on another science-fiction game. **Renegade Legion: Interceptor** (\$59.95) is based on the popular board game. Take either side in the galactic struggle between the Terran Overlord Government and the

Renegade Legions. Command a squadron of star fighters in tactical ship-to-ship combat.

You can choose from 24 types of fighters or design your own. Equip your fleet with lasers, electron and neutron particle guns, a vast array of missiles, or whatever else it takes to get the job done. Your missions will range from enemy fleet



Renegade Legion: Interceptor

engagements and space-station defense to anti-pirate raids and all-out melees.

— L.L.

PLAY TO WIN

You — yes, you — can win a trip to Russia, race-car driving lessons, or aerial-combat lessons. Just enter Spectrum Holobyte's **Drive It, Fly It, Play It, Win It Sweepstakes**. The prizes correspond with three of Spectrum Holobyte's (Alameda, CA) game series: **Stunt Driver** (\$49.95) and **Vette** (\$49.95), **Flight of the Intruder** (\$59.95) and **Falcon** (\$29.95), and **Tetris** (\$34.95).

One person will win a three-day course at the Jim Russell Racing Driver School at the Laguna Seca Raceway in Salinas, California, and will learn racing techniques in a Formula Ford. This prize also includes a week for two in the Monterey/Carmel area.

Another winner will enjoy a half-day class at Air

Combat USA in Fullerton, California, to learn air combat maneuvers and tactics. This is the nation's only civilian "Top Gun" school. This prize also includes passes to Disneyland.

The final grand prize is a ten-day tour of Kiev, Leningrad, and Moscow.

You'll find entry forms in specially marked Spectrum Holobyte games, beginning November 1st. Simply fill out an entry form and select the trip of your choice. You must be 18 years or older to win. No purchase is necessary.

— L.L.

FUN IN THE SUN

If you've always thought Miami was kind of a weird place, you should see it now. As part of the post-nuclear-holocaust world in Electronic Arts' (San Mateo, CA) **Fountain of Dreams** (\$49.95), Florida is an island full of bizarre mutants. Being trapped on the island wouldn't be all that bad, but now you're turning into a mutant.

You have to find the



Fountain of Dreams

Fountain of Dreams before things get out of hand. The water from the fountain is the only thing that will bring you, and the rest of the island, back to normal.

Fountain of Dreams comes from the producers of Wasteland and features a similar mode of play. You can play as any of five



KISS YOUR ASTEROID GOODBYE



You'll be busy swerving past moving barriers, blasting robot guardians, and keeping the walls from caving in on you. Some say you're the best rocket jockey in the galaxy, but are

you ready for the Tunnels of Armageddon™? Strap your heart in as you warp through an extensive and deadly network of underground tunnels at mind-numbing speed in your quest to save the world. Pick up special items to help you get past the "nastier" obstacles that await you in the 20 increasingly difficult stages of tunnels. And remember to take the right route, because every second counts.

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Game #2 - Dangerous Dave

Dangerous Dave is an action-packed 10-level game in a treacherous Deserted Pirate's Hideout where you must retrieve Dave's stolen trophies. You will leap up to dangerous heights, tumble over scorching flame pits, and duck flying beasts. There are guns to fight off creepy creatures and jet packs to boost you over obstacles. Mario never had it so tough!

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character types, including a vigilante, a survivalist, or a hood.

You'll have to learn to disarm bombs, evade mutants, use medicine, and find the Fountain of Dreams just to survive. What would Ponce de Leon think of this one? — L.L.

EA'S LATEST

Electronic Arts (San Mateo, CA) is hoping to fly high this holiday season with some great titles. **Stormovik: SU-25 Soviet Attack Fighter** (\$49.95) places you behind the controls of a Sukhoi SU-25 ground-attack aircraft. With 256-color VGA and 11 different exterior views, the graphics are gorgeous. In addition to geopolitical intrigue and a plot against the Soviet president, you'll fight a war against terrorists who control Soviet and American aircraft and vehicles.

In **Hard Nova** (\$49.95), EA's excellent space-adventure role-playing game, you're a rough-and-ready mercenary plying your trade on the deep-space frontier. The fantastic graphics feature on-screen star systems based on actual NASA-generated deep-space maps, which come packaged as part of the off-disk copy protection. — W.N.

HOT TICKETS FROM LUCASFILMS

Lucasfilms Games (San Raphael, CA) moved down the road recently to the Industrial Light and Magic complex to facilitate access to I.L.M.'s special-effects production facilities. Stay tuned for more details.

In the meantime, **Secret**

Weapons of the Luftwaffe (\$59.95) should wing its way to store shelves soon. In the same vein as **Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain** (\$59.95), this historical flight simulator lets you pit the Luftwaffe's revolutionary weapons against Allied bombers.

For an interesting change of pace, try **Nightshift** (\$39.95). In this one you're a toy maker who has to run a complex doll machine to fill a quota of mini R2D2s, Luke Skywalkers, Indiana Joneses, Darth Vaders, and so on. Gremlin-like creatures called lemmings and pain-in-the-butt lawyers hamper your work. — W.N.

CINEMAWARE'S SCENE STEALERS

Keep an eye out for **Dragon Lord** (\$49.95), Cinemaware's (Westlake Village, CA) new spellbinding role-playing game. You can be a dragon master, one of the game's three characters,

and learn the secrets of immortality by raising and breeding dragons.

You must also have some magic tricks up your sleeve, because casting spells is a major part of the game. (Don't worry: Cinemaware includes a separate manual to help you hone your spell-casting skills.) Once you get the hang of it you can even invite three other would-be dragon breeders to play with you.

If you want to play a game that has magic, but you find **Dragon Lord** difficult to digest, check out **Arcade Fever** (\$39.95). With it you get two arcade/strategy-adventure games, **Stormlord** and **Onslaught**, both of which feature rousing hack-and-slash adventure and gorgeous graphics.

Although **Lords of the Rising Sun** (\$49.95) and **TV Sports Basketball** (\$49.95) may show up in your Christmas stocking, you'll have to wait until '91 to see **Wings** (\$49.95), the

arcade-style WWI flight simulator, and **Blood Relatives**, a murder-mystery role-playing game (price undecided at press time).

As you bring in the New Year, you'll want to toast **3 in Three** (\$49.95), an unusual puzzle game created by Cliff Johnson, of Fool's Errand fame. In this game you play the number three, which has been bounced out of a spreadsheet by a weird power surge.

Your challenge is to move your way through a string of 60 puzzles to fix the glitch, then get back to the spreadsheet. — W.N.

NEWS FROM SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

The new Falcon has landed! **Falcon 3.0** (\$69.95) from Spectrum Holobyte (Alameda, CA) is one of the best jet-flight simulations around.

By revamping weapons and radar to correspond with those of the General Dynamics F-16 Falcon, and adding graphics details to the enemy aircraft, the company has made Falcon 3.0 the most realistic simulation in the sky.

You also lead a squadron of pilots on missions to Iraq, Panama, and other international hotspots. All the game's area maps mimic the real thing.

For a new flying challenge, strap into the A-10 Warthog tank killer with **Avenger A-10** (price undecided at press time).

You'll pilot the subsonic Big Ugly on missions through Panama and the Middle East, but you can also operate up to eight other planes. How's that for excitement? — W.N.

DID SOMEBODY SAY "DEAL"?

"PC Games" readers don't need much incentive to buy new games. But in case you were looking for a little persuasion, Electronic Arts and Sony are making it even tougher for you to say no to entertainment software.

If you buy an Electronic Arts game between October 1, 1990, and March 1, 1991, you can receive discounts on Sony products — an economy-minded holiday shopper's paradise.

- Buy one of the ten featured Electronic Arts titles and get a Sony Walkman for \$15.
- Buy two of the ten featured Electronic Arts titles and get a Sony Watchman for \$85.
- Buy three of the ten featured Electronic Arts titles and get a Sony Discman for \$120.

The ten games are **Populous**, **LHX Attack Chopper**, **PGA Tour Golf**, **Centurion: Defender of Rome**, **John Madden Football**, **Starflight 2**, **688 Attack Sub**, **Lakers vs. Celtics & the NBA Playoffs**, **Stormovik: SU-25 Soviet Attack Fighter**, and **The Bard's Tale III: Thief of Fate**.

At press time, according to Electronics Arts, Egghead Discount Software, Walden Software, Electronics Boutique, and Software Etc. had committed to participating in the program.

— L.L.

BREAKING KABLAM THE SOUND BARRIER

With good 'sound'
advice you can make
your PC roar.

By Gregg Keizer

THOSE SWEEPING OPERATIC BEEPS THAT spill from your PC's internal speaker are meant to stir your soul as you blaze down on the enemy, or stalk the beast that haunts the damp castle cellar. Those staccato boopboopboops are supposed to remind you of the rat-a-tat-tat of movie machine guns. You don't buy it? Neither do I. PC sound is about as true to the real thing as elevator muzak.

Although a game's soundtrack should be as important

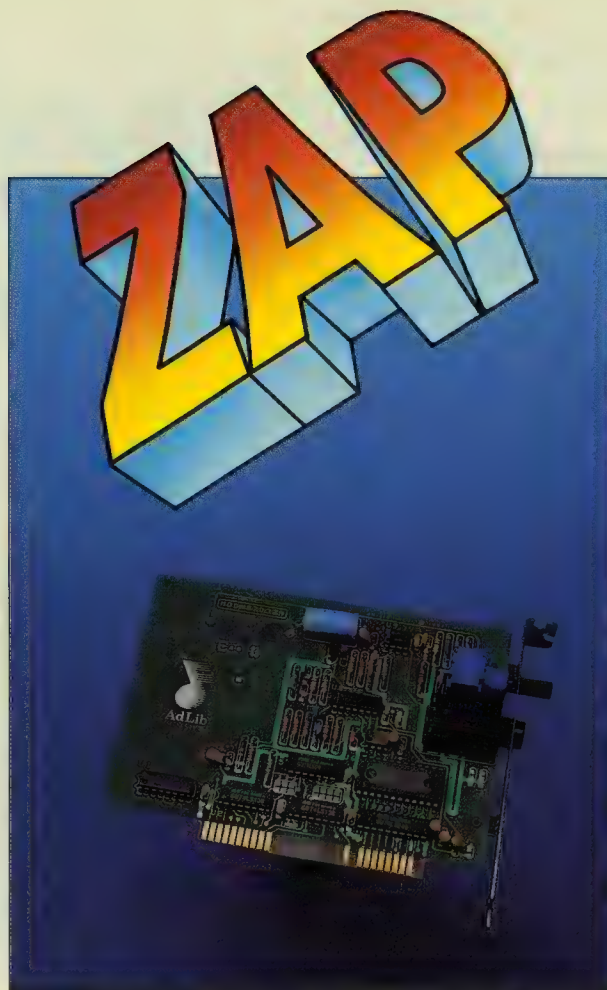
as a movie's, it's seldom as thrilling. Just as movie music gets you in the mood and keeps you there with chilly notes as the hero steps into that dark hallway, or with bright, bouncy tunes when laughter's around the corner, PC game soundtracks should warn you of danger and let you know when you can relax.

In fact, a game's soundtrack should even pile on clues and cues. Without sound in your flight simulator you'd need to look constantly at the throttle setting, instead

of listening to the engine's roar. Without audio explosions from that wrist-wrenching arcade classic, you'd have to second-guess your laser accuracy.

Good sound, like good video, can make a game. Although it may not make a bad game good, it can make a good game great. Just step into a crowded arcade and tangle with the standup version of your favorite game, then head home and listen to your PC's version. Disappointing, isn't it?

Well, thanks to sound boards such as Ad Lib's **Ad Lib Music Synthesizer**, Creative Labs' **Sound Blaster**, Covox's **Sound Master**, and Roland Corporation's **Roland LAP-1**, however, you can do something about it. You can bring the excitement of that dimly lit arcade to your home and into your PC. With one of these sound boards you can make your PC sing — and blast, ring, scream, thunder, and whisper.



With its support from game publishers and its affordable price, the Ad Lib board has become today's standard.

video card and had no problems. Ad Lib ties for first in my ease-of-setup contest — in moments you can snap it in because there are no jumpers to fool with or settings to change. Installing the card takes less than two minutes — less than five if you count opening and closing the computer's cover.

Then simply by plugging in your headphones you connect them to the Ad Lib card. Ad Lib even includes an eighth-inch jack adaptor for your personal-stereo headphones.

Wiring up the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer to a stereo system or external speakers means a trip to Radio Shack — for best sound results you'll need an RCA Y adaptor (\$2.79) and patch cords (under

\$5). Your final task is to run cable from the back of your computer to the AUX jacks on your stereo receiver, amplifier, or boom box.

AD LIB MUSIC SYNTHESIZER

Critical mass — that's what PC game sound reached once every publisher of note started supporting the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer card. That exploding market, combined with the card's low price, has made it the most popular sound board around.

The Ad Lib card is a half-sized FM synthesizer that can play as many as 11 instrument sounds (or sound effects) simultaneously. It doesn't produce stereo sound, so you won't hear engine blasts roar from one speaker to another. Featuring a quarter-inch audio-output jack on its back, the Ad Lib card also has a convenient volume knob you can adjust without opening your computer's case.

Although the manual tells you to install the Ad Lib card in a slot as far away from the video board as possible (to protect against potential high-frequency interference), I stuck it only two slots away from my

The Test

My benchmark games for the Ad Lib card were Sierra's **Space Quest III**, a graphics adventure game, and Broderbund's **WolfPack**, a submarine-simulation game. With the Ad Lib board, Space Quest's musical score sounded a bit tinny and lacked the depth I had hoped to hear. Sound effects were good, but not great — much better than the internal speaker, of course, but somewhat disappointing. WolfPack, however, demonstrated that the Ad Lib card is no weakling — the sound effects of depth-charge attacks and torpedoes launching and striking home were impressive. With the Ad Lib board, WolfPack's musical score was good, but not great.

I give the Ad Lib card three and a half notes out of a possible five. It gets one note simply for its support; the Ad Lib is today's industry standard. Another half note comes from its affordable price — an appealing feature that's put sound into the hands of the masses. And I give it two notes for quality. Although the card isn't great, it's good at blasting out sound effects.

SOUND BLASTER

For your introduction to stereo game sound, slap Creative Labs' Sound Blaster into any empty slot. This half-sized synthesizer board is a three-in-one threat: Not only does it sound out the 12 voices of its predecessor, Game Blaster, it resonates with 11 Ad Lib voices, and includes digital voice input and output. In other words, this board almost does it all.

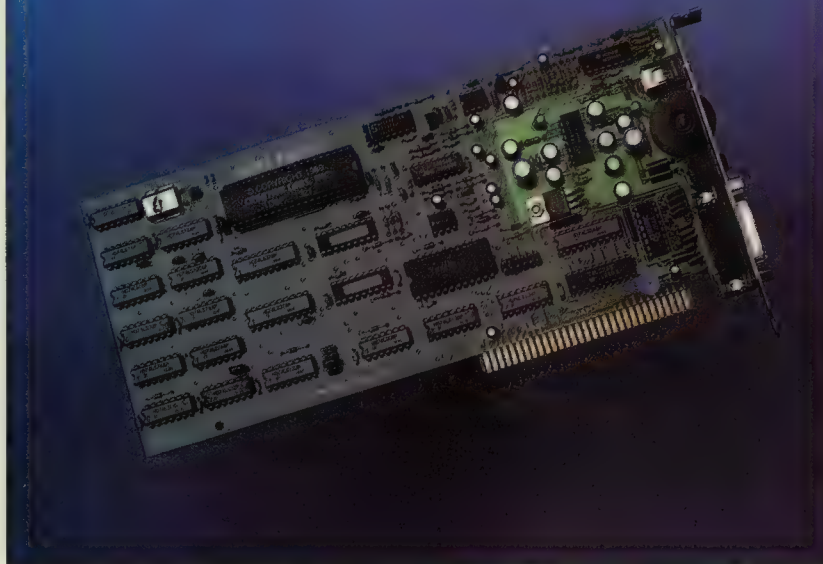
The Sound Blaster card comes packed. An on-board four-watts-per-channel amplifier powers the sound, so you can drive room-sized speakers directly. An eighth-inch stereo jack waits for headphone, speaker, or stereo connections. The volume control is handy, but harder to get your finger on than the Ad Lib control.

There's also an analog joystick port on the board, a nice extra for game players. A bunch of features extraneous to game play include a microphone jack and a MIDI interface. (You can't use the latter without Creative's **MIDI Connector Box**.)

Installing the Sound Blaster is potentially much more troublesome than adding the Ad Lib card: The default settings may force you to install additional sound drivers, or they may even conflict with an existing card or port in your PC. Although I didn't need to add any drivers to my system, I had to move my mouse from the second serial port to the first. Setting up your Sound Blaster takes about 15 minutes (testing included), or longer if you need to change the input/output (I/O) address and interrupt request line (IRQ) jumpers.

When you connect the Sound Blaster to a stereo across the room you'll also need an RCA Y adaptor and a set of patch cords. Of course, your Walkman-style headphones will plug into the board.

PING



Creative Lab's Sound Blaster board comes packed with extra features, such as voice input and built-in MIDI interface, but it's more expensive than the Ad Lib card.

The Test

When I ran *Space Quest III*, I found it rather difficult to tell the difference between the Ad Lib and Sound Blaster boards. Sound Blaster puts music in stereo (a terrific improvement), but the quality of Sound Blaster's and Ad Lib's music was similar.

On both boards even the sound effects were the same. (The introduction, however, put the Sound Blaster's digital voice channel to work with a brief crystal-clear speech.) You'll

probably find Sound Blaster's improvements to *Wolf-Pack* more noticeable. The game's depth-charge explosions, sonar pings, and torpedo launchings were great in stereo, and its music was actually menacing. After listening several times, however, I thought the Sound Blaster sounded better emulating the Ad Lib board than the C/MS option.

The Sound Blaster rings in at four notes. I give it one and a half notes for support (it handles everything the Ad Lib does, and more), and two and a half notes for the quality of its stereo sound. It doesn't get good marks on price — it should cost nearly the same as Ad Lib — but the additional features, such as digitized voice channel, voice input, and built-in MIDI interface, make up the difference in price for many people.

SOUND MASTER

Covox's Sound Master marches to a different drummer than the Ad Lib and Sound Blaster boards. This half-sized card features a three-voice sound chip and an eight-bit DMA (direct memory access) digitizer for quality speech and sound. Relatively unsupported ➤



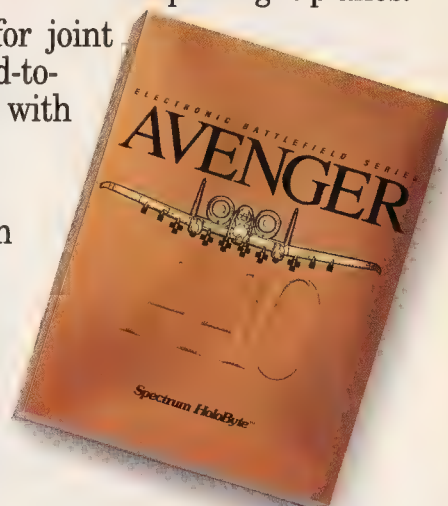
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Circle 122 on Reader Service Card.

by PC game publishers, the Sound Master pumps out stereo sound to the two minispeakers included, or to headphones, other speakers, or a stereo system.

On board you'll find an eighth-inch jack and two digital joystick ports. (Don't get too excited — digital joysticks, like those used by Commodore and Atari computers, are relatively unknown in the PC world.)

Attached to the board is a thin wire you'll plug into your PC's internal speaker connection to reroute those beeps and boops to the minispeakers. On one level, then, Sound Master supports all games, or at least all that produce sound from internal speakers.

Installing the Sound Master can be a trying experience. Slipping the board into an available slot is simple, but it takes time to locate your PC's existing internal speaker wire, trace it to the plug



The Sound Master board is the least expensive of the four, but it lacks support from game publishers.

on the motherboard, remove the cards, and connect the Sound Master's wire.

I spent more than an hour and a half installing the board and tracking down problems before I got the minispeakers to beep. The amount of time you'll need depends on your PC: Your internal speaker wire and motherboard may be soldered together.

Charge the Jury

If your game's audio is nothing but beeps and boops, it'll sound the same whether it emanates from inside the computer or from a set of stereo speakers. Neither of my two benchmark programs, Space Quest III and WolfPack, supports the card, so all I could get out of them was amplified stereophonic beeping. Sound Master just doesn't have the same level of support from PC game publishers as the Ad Lib and Sound Blaster boards. ➡

Supporting Cast

Now that game publishers have finally caught on to the popularity of PC sound boards, most support the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer, Sound Blaster, Sound Master, or Roland LAPC-1. All but a few publishers include sound-board support on their package labels, making it easier than ever to tell whether a game supports your card before you break the shrinkwrap.

All sound-board manufacturers and distributors track the entertainment-software publishers and packages that support their cards. Here's a sampling of the packages from their lists. Call your sound-board manufacturer for more information on the scores of other programs their products support, or contact the publishers of your favorite games.

Ad Lib

It Came from the Desert (Cinemaware)
Loom (Lucasfilm)
LHX Attack Chopper (Electronic Arts)
David Wolf: Secret Agent (Dynamix)
Railroad Tycoon (Microprose)
Operation Wolf (Taito)
Faces (Spectrum Holobyte)
Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego? (Broderbund)

Sound Blaster

The Third Courier (Accolade)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Kanami/Ultra)
Hero's Quest (Sierra)
F-15 Strike Eagle II (Microprose)
Arkanoid II (Taito)
The Manhole (Mediagenic)
Battle of Britain (Lucasfilm)

Sound Master

SimCity (Maxis)
Ultima VI (Origin)
The Playroom (Broderbund)

Roland

Conquest of Camelot (Sierra)
Indianapolis 500 (Electronic Arts)
Ultima VI (Origin)
A-10 Tank Killer (Dynamix)
Leisure Suit Larry III (Sierra)



Let's go back in time. All the way back to about 275 BC. Civilization exists only in small pockets like Rome, Greece and Egypt. The rest of the world is a vast terra incognita, peopled with strange and dangerous barbarians. You are a young Centurion, sent with your legion to subdue marauding tribes of the Alps.

What would such an adventure be like?



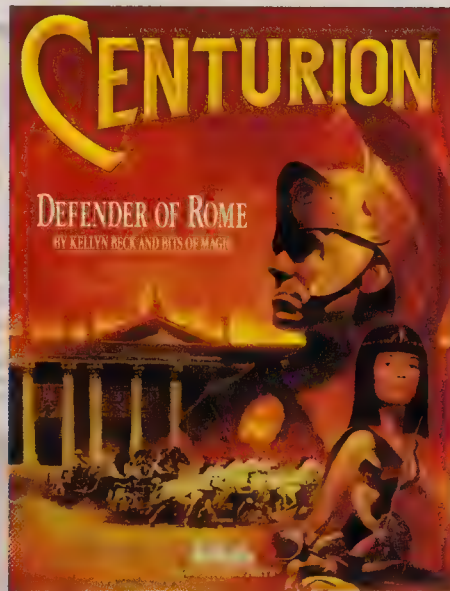
That's the premise of Centurion: Defender of Rome™, a new cinematic adventure, where you don't just watch the story unfold, you **control the action**. You'll race chariots in the Circus Maximus, sail fleets of ancient warships across the Mediterranean, compete in gladiator shows in the Colosseum, seduce the voluptuous Cleopatra and lead Roman legions into battle at the edge of civilization.



In Centurion, rich images of a time long ago are brought to life with cinematic techniques. I began exploring the uses of cinematic techniques in Defender of the Crown™ and Rocket Ranger™. But as great as these early cinematic adventures LOOKED, they lacked the addicting involvement and interactive levels of great computer games. The "cinematic" part was complete. The "adventure" part was in its infancy.

The cinematic adventure has finally grown up. We used every last one of our secrets in making Centurion. It's all there: great graphics, cinematic editing, strategy, and depth of gameplay that players now demand.

THE S·E·C·R·E·T·S OF CINEMATIC ADVENTURES



Take Centurion's chariot racing scene. We planned out every scene the way a filmmaker would shoot it. You see your chariot enter the Circus Maximus and pass in front of a packed grandstand. The "camera" cuts to an aerial shot of the track and zooms in for a close-up of your chariot. Suddenly the race begins. You hold the reins as you charge around the track, whipping your opponent and trying to shatter his chariot.



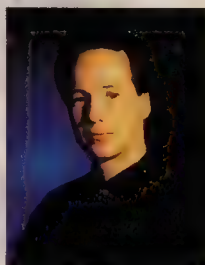
We even added a fully-orchestrated musical soundtrack. We asked award-winning film composer Jon Newton to work his magic with sound boards. The pounding drums and blaring trumpets bring out the drama of each event.

But we wanted to go beyond cinematic appeal. We wanted to create an environment that's different each time

you play, one that doesn't have the usual pre-determined path. Like our land battle. You control the action and create your own winning strategies. You direct the movement of each infantry and cavalry unit. You send your general into the fray to bolster your troops' morale. Retreat. Charge ahead. Outflank. Even form a wedge. But your enemies are "smart" and unpredictable. They'll adapt to outwit your previously successful strategies and present you with new challenges each time you play.



Cinematic graphics and great game play. This is what makes Centurion the first complete cinematic adventure.

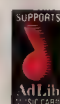


It took my group, Bits of Magic and Electronic Arts® three years to bring the epic world of Centurion to life. I sincerely hope you'll enjoy your journey back in time to the world of ancient Rome. (Here's one last secret: Save the Parthians for last. They can tear you to pieces.)



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2) Call 1-800-245-4525 with VISA/MC, USA or Canada, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Pacific Time. IBM, Tandy and compatibles. \$49.95 (3.5" available). Screen shots represent IBM version. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Incorporated. Tandy is a registered trademark of the Tandy Corporation. Defender of the Crown and Rocket Ranger are trademarks of Cinemaware Corporation.



SimCity, a city-building simulation from Maxis Software, is an exception. **SimCity** uses Sound Master to pour out sound effects, such as earthquakes, explosions, and rampaging monsters.

I award the Sound Master two and a half notes. It gets nothing for its publisher support. (There isn't much at the moment.) Sound Master wins a full note on price

— it's the least expensive board we've reviewed. And it garners one and a half notes on sound quality.

Although installation is difficult, I didn't subtract anything from the score. PC novices may have their hands full getting the card to run, but experienced game players probably have few qualms about cracking open their computer's case and rooting around for the speaker plug.

ROLAND LAPC-1

Wow! That's what you'll say when you hear the Roland LAPC-1 play a game's soundtrack through your headphones or stereo speakers. With a tone-generation system that's functionally equivalent to Roland's better-known **MT-32 Multi-Timbral Sound Module**, the LAPC-1 offers top-of-the-line sound quality at a top-of-the-line price.

The LAPC-1 may produce the same CD-quality sound as the MT-32, but its all-on-one-board convenience is a great selling point. Unlike Roland's MT-32, which includes separate card, case, and power supply, the LAPC-1 is a single full-sized board that installs in any free slot. This 32-voice synthesizer contains 128 instru-



The Roland LAPC-1 will bring you incredible sound quality at a not-so-cheap price. Many game publishers, however, don't support Roland boards.

ment sounds, 34 rhythm sounds, and 33 sound effects. Its back panel features a MIDI interface connector, an eighth-inch headphone jack, and left- and right-channel audio-output jacks.

Installation couldn't be easier. Once you take off the computer's cover, all you need do is stick the card in a slot. The LAPC-1 ties with the Ad Lib in the set-up race; I had

the LAPC-1 in place in less than two minutes. I just plugged in my stereo via the audio jacks and sound came out the room's speakers.

Sound Off

With sounds I'd never heard from any other board (or any computer), *Space Quest III*'s introductory soundtrack was unbelievably clear and rich. The difference between the LAPC-1 and a card such as the Sound Blaster is as dramatic as the difference in sound quality between a movie theater and a portable television set.

WolfPack doesn't support the LAPC-1, so I substituted Microprose's **Railroad Tycoon**, a strategy simulation game. Although the game includes minimal sound effects — train whistles, coins clinking, the building of tracks — they were several steps above the other board's sound effects.

I give the LAPC-1 four notes. Only half a note goes for support, because the Roland MT-32 and LAPC-1 won't work with as many games as either the Ad Lib or the Sound Blaster. (Sierra Online was one of the first adopters of the Roland and still maintains the lead in MT-32 and LAPC-1 support.)

The LAPC-1 deserves three and a half notes for sound quality — it's just that good. The price, however, is a ➤

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drawback for all but the most dedicated PC gamer. The LAPC-1 costs nearly two and a half times as much as the Sound Blaster. I guess the saying is true — you get what you pay for.

The Ears Have It

The pick of the sound crop is Sound Blaster. Although this sound card is a Chevy compared to the Roland LAPC-1's Jaguar-like quality, it produces the best sound for the money, uses stereo, digitizes speech, and has across-the-board game support. The only problem with the Sound Blaster is its installation. My setup was a snap to complete, but you may need to change jumpers to get the card working.

Ad Lib runs a close second, simply because it's priced reasonably. I didn't like its monophonic output (espe-

cially after listening to the other three boards), but it puts sound power in your PC for 37 percent of the cost of the Sound Blaster. In a world where money didn't matter, I'd be tempted to go with the Roland LAPC-1. (Money is most people's reality, however — something reflected in Roland's small support base.)

The Sound Master just didn't stack up. Although the low cost is attractive, and some of its features — particularly its digitized speech — are interesting, to be a viable alternative this card needs more support from game publishers.

Any of these four boards, no matter what its faults or price, is better than the beeps and boops you're used to hearing. Weigh the costs of the boards, and examine the compatibility of your current game library. With any of these sound boards you can pick the tune you want your PC to whistle. □

Product Information

Ad Lib Music Synthesizer

Ad Lib, Inc.
50 Staniford Street
Suite 800
Boston, MA 02114
(800) 463-2686
\$149.95

**Roland LAPC-1,
\$595
MT-32 Multi-Timbral
Sound Module,
\$595**
Roland Corporation
7200 Dominion Circle
Los Angeles, CA 90040
(213) 685-5141

**Sound Blaster,
\$239.95
MIDI Connector Box,
\$79.95**
Creative Labs, Inc.
Distributed by Brown-Wagh
130-D Knowles Drive
Los Gatos, CA 95030
(408) 378-3838

Sound Master
Covox, Inc.
675 Conger Street
Eugene, OR 97402
(503) 342-1271
\$119.95

Benchmark Games

Railroad Tycoon

Microprose Software
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Hunt Valley, MD 21030
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512K IBM PC/AT/XT,
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CGA/EGA/VGA
supports Ad Lib and Roland
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SimCity

Maxis Software
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Space Quest III

Sierra On-Line
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WolfPack

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But Wonderland isn't just a bewitching story. It's playing environment breaks new ground for computer adventures. Here's what the editor of *Computer Gaming World* has to say about it:

"The game is neither strictly a text adventure nor can it be described as a graphic adventure. It is its own genre... The game uses multi-tasking to offer an incredible array of features..."

Besides superb graphics and sound support, Wonderland's unique windowing environment offers pull-down verb and noun menus, graphics you can size up or down and move around the screen, automated mapping, point-and-click object manipulation, a compass for directional movement, and extensive on-screen help.

"Innovative," "ambitious" (The Chicago Tribune),

"exquisite and impressive" (CGW), "brilliant and insane" (The Electronic Gamer), are more words used to describe Wonderland. Questbusters calls its windowed universe "the ultimate interface."

Stunning graphics, impressive sound board support and a captivating story, all in a sophisticated new windowing system, combine to make Wonderland the richest adventure ever: a game to play, to tell, and to inhabit.

Screens taken from IBM VGA version
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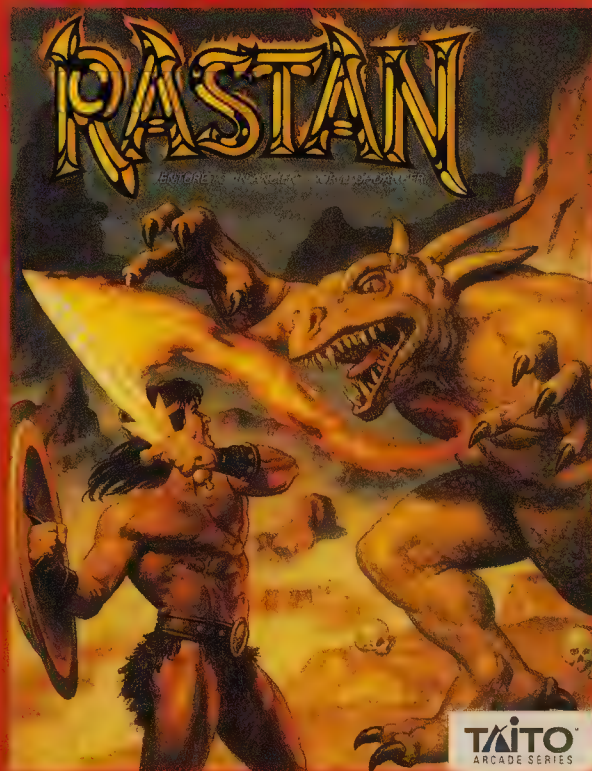


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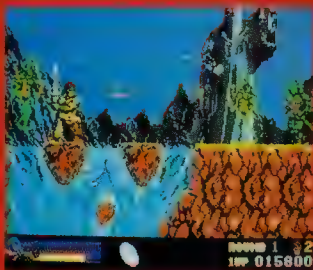


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You are Rastan*, the bravest warrior lord in Lograth. The malevolent Castle King holds the world in his deadly reign of darkness. A life-or-death confrontation is your destiny.

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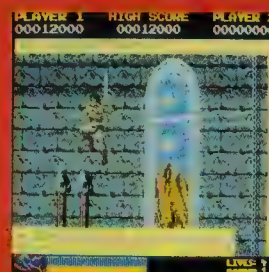
So summon your courage and call upon all of your might. For you are the legendary Rastan. In the ultimate Boy Meets Gole arcade epic, from Taito*



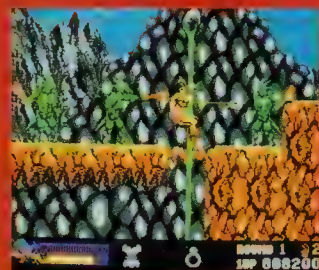
Traverse treacherous torrents of whitewater and chasms of fire.



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Pick up your assignment
and leave that nine-to-five job behind —
the life of a secret agent awaits.

By Lafe Low

Walk into an avid gamer's den and you'll probably find the shelves teeming with software titles based on themes from best-selling novels and blockbuster movies. While some of these games fail to capture their predecessors' sense of spine-tingling adventure, Dynamix's **David Wolf: Secret Agent**, Sierra On-Line's **Codename: Iceman**, and Accolade's **The Third Courier** draw you into the exciting and dangerous world of espionage. In **David Wolf: Secret Agent**, you're the new James Bond — complete with elaborate gadgets, unfailing confidence bordering on cockiness, and a constant stream of witty quips. Even the lethal Bruno Vasto, the villain in this spy game, resembles Ernst Stavro

Blofeld, one of Bond's recurring SPECTRE adversaries.

Codename: Iceman is redolent of a Tom Clancy novel, but as Commander John B. Westland you play a more active role than Clancy's C.I.A. official Jack Ryan — you're a naval officer, submarine commander, Navy SEAL, and special agent all rolled into one.

The Third Courier follows the theme of classic covert confrontation between East and West that electrifies the pages of Robert Ludlum novels. The setting is Berlin, the city that seems to host most of the world's spy games. You'll find yourself crossing from West to East Berlin and back again in search of a traitorous courier who heads for Moscow bearing top-secret NATO defense plans. ☛

DAVID WOLF: SECRET AGENT

The free world is in trouble. Viper, the world's most notorious crime organization, has stolen a state-of-the-art SF-2 stealth fighter jet and kidnapped Dr. Kelly O'Neal, the brilliant aerospace engineer responsible for the project. Peregrine (your organization) has put you in charge of finding and returning the jet and rescuing Dr. O'Neal. (And, naturally, Kelly O'Neal is as beautiful as any of James Bond's leading ladies.)

The digitized shots of real actors, the movie-like script, and the superb action sequences make David Wolf: Secret Agent seem like a James Bond movie. You actually feel as though you're stepping into Sean Connery's shoes.

You can play David Wolf on two levels: Opt for the complete "cinematic" experience by following the storyline and playing the action sequences at intervals. Or skip to any of the action sequences and replay them as often as you want. Thanks to Dynamix's VCR interface, you don't need to complete all stages of the game to see what happens at the end.

At any point, you can press Escape to bring up a VCR-like control with which you can pause the

game, fast-forward through the story screens, skip to any action sequence, adjust the difficulty level, text speed, or level of graphics detail, or continue.

I hope to see this feature in future Dynamix titles. This VCR interface is unique and impressive because it gives you an enormous degree of flexibility in game play.

In fact, the game's sequences are so challenging you'll need to use VCR control to skip around and practice. There are five action/simulation sequences — hang gliding, parachuting (which includes two parts), two separate car-chase scenes, and a ride in the stolen stealth jet.

Spies Like Us

Like the opening scene in any James Bond movie, David Wolf: Secret Agent starts out with a heart-pounding action sequence — the hang-gliding simulation. You, as David Wolf, are testing one of Peregrine's newest gadgets, an attack hang glider equipped with machine guns and radar.

In the middle of your test flight off the cliffs of Dover, you're joined by four other Viper attack gliders. You'll have to shoot all four of them out of the sky, without crashing into them. I spent a great deal of time with the hang-glider simulation — partly because it took some getting used to and partly because it was so much fun.

The car-chase scenes are fairly simple simulations. You have controls to turn left or right, speed up or slow down, select a weapon, and use the weapon.

Agent David Wolf must reclaim the stolen fighter jet and rescue the brilliant and beautiful engineer.

Undercover Mission

When we prepared our dossier on spy games, three titles eluded our grasp. Since then, we've tracked them down and discovered a bit about what goes on behind those shrinkwrap and cardboard disguises. If you've got high-security clearance, we'll share our files on Capstone's **CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN** (\$49.95; 14160 South-

west 139th Court, Miami FL 33186, 305-252-9040), Microprose's **COVERT ACTION** (\$59.95; 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley MD 21030, 301-771-1151), and Access Software's **COUNTDOWN** (\$59.95; 545 West 500 South, Bountiful, UT 84010, 801-298-9077).

Cardinal of the Kremlin's storyline follows Tom Clancy's novel of

the same title closely. In the game and in the book, both the United States and the Soviet Union are working on a ground-based laser powerful enough to shoot either a satellite or a missile out of the sky. The Soviets, however, are a step ahead of the Americans and have kidnapped the scientist in charge of the American project.

Thanks to Mikhail Filitov, a.k.a. the Cardinal (America's highest-ranking spy), the Americans know a lot more about the Soviet project than the Soviets imagine. Feeding that information through the C.I.A. to Afghan rebels, we begin to fight back.

This game promises the same action that Clancy packed into the book. With action sequences interspersed throughout the game, it's a true graphics adventure. You must keep the American laser project going, monitor the Cardinal's information, and pass it on to the Afghan rebels — all while trying to locate the kidnapped scientist. Retailing for about \$49.95, you can expect Cardinal of the Kremlin by the time you read this overview.

Covert Action casts you as Max Remington, and pits you against the same sort of drug smugglers and terrorists you see on the evening news. You can

Keep your eyes peeled for Capstone's newest release. Cardinal of the Kremlin's action-packed sequences make this game a graphics adventure.



Your car is equipped with oil, machine guns, and missiles. Going into a sharp corner with two bad guys on your tail and giving them a puddle of oil to slide through is a panic.

The parachuting simulation has two action-filled parts: First you're forced to jump out of a plane without a parachute on your back. Your old buddy and current nemesis Garth Stock is falling below you, however, and he's wearing a chute.

When you catch up to Garth, a sequence of screens shows you engaging in a midair fist fight with him and relieving him of his parachute. Be forewarned: If you either fall past the open chute or take too long to catch him, you'll plummet and slam into the ground.

If you manage to catch Garth, in the second part of this sequence you'll descend over a truck heading for the Viper airbase. If you miss the truck, you'll find Vasto's head henchman, Boor, staring you in the face when you get up. If you land on top of the truck, you get a free ride into the compound where you can finish your assignment.

The final action sequence puts you and Kelly O'Neal in the cockpit of the stealth fighter. Although blowing the doors off the hangar and taking off is a piece of cake, making a clean getaway is another story. As soon as you're airborne, the



Whether you're jumping from planes without a parachute, or flying a hang glider equipped with machine guns and radar, beware of Vasto and his henchman, Boor.

enraged Vasto gives orders to shoot you down. Dodging a surface-to-air missile is challenging for any spy-game adventurer.

Whether or not you get hit, once you're in the sky, you've saved the free world. If that missile finds you, however, your victory will seem hollow — especially when you see the sequence portraying your funeral.

With a perfect blend of action and simulation, combined with a captivating storyline and excellent graphics, David Wolf: Secret Agent is a superb game. If you've always yearned to be a James Bond-type character, here's your chance. ➡

select missions in Europe, Central America, and the Middle East. Each assignment can cover any of 16 cities in any of the geographic areas. Your persona as a covert operative can be male or female.

You'll engage in spy-type action such as tapping phone lines, planting bugs, setting up stake-outs, breaking codes, and follow-

ing suspects to all corners of the globe. If Microprose's previous simulations are any indication, Covert Action promises to be a realistic and gripping simulation of real-life covert operations.

Countdown looks as if it'll be more of a murder mystery than a spy game, but nevertheless full of suspense. Labeled as an "interactive mystery," Count-

down starts you off sitting in jail charged with murder — but you have amnesia, so you're not really sure what has happened.

This game features Access Software's RealSound digital-sound process, digitized shots of live actors, and animated action sequences. You'll travel across the United States, through Cairo, and around Europe, ending

up on the Orient Express as you try to get yourself, and the rest of the world, out of trouble.

As soon as our field operatives uncover shipping versions of Cardinal of the Kremlin, Covert Action, and Countdown, we'll give you all the details. You won't need a security clearance to explore these fun-filled games.

— L. L.



In Covert Action you can help solve the drug problem. Set up stake-outs, tap phone lines, and teach those drug smugglers a lesson they won't soon forget.

Countdown is more than a who-done-it mystery game. You've been accused of murder, and now you must travel the world finding clues to prove your innocence.



CODENAME: ICEMAN

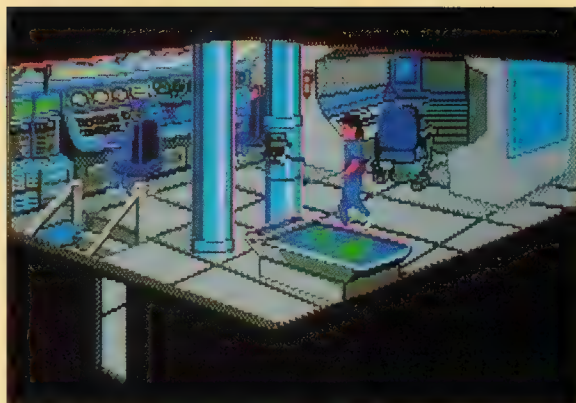
Before you know it, you'll take command of a sub and bomb an oil rig.

Being a special agent isn't easy. Even when you're on vacation in faraway Tahiti, you can still get tapped for an assignment. That's what happens when you, Commander John B. Westland, U.S.N., are called to rescue Ambassador Richard Lloyd from his terrorist kidnappers.

You begin your adventure in paradise, relaxing on the beach with a magazine. After receiving an urgent message from General Braxton, however, you're off to Washington, D.C., for a briefing, then on to the naval base at Pearl Harbor for a trip aboard the U.S.S. *Blackhawk*. You'll travel up and around the Arctic Ocean, ending up in the Mediterranean, in time to confront the terrorists and rescue the ambassador.

In Control

Within the framework of Sierra's standard interface, you find your way around the game. When your character is standing, direct him about the screen with the arrow keys. When you come to some point of action, start typing whatever you want to do. With the game's parser (the portion of the



In *Codename: Iceman* the graphics screens include the sub's control room, complete with a myriad of dials and gauges.

program that "understands" your commands), you can sum up your surroundings with commands such as *take*, *look*, and *use*. My best advice is to look at everything and take it with you if you can. Leaving something lying around that you'll need later will put you in a bit of a jam. The point of the game is to complete the mission instead of accumulating points. Although Sierra keeps your running score, use it only as a guideline. When the program awards you points, you'll know you made the correct move.

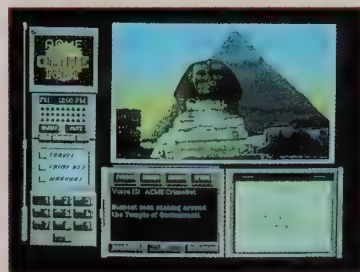
Once you're aboard the *Blackhawk*, you confirm your orders with the captain and take command of the sub. By watching the myriad of gauges and dials, you pilot the sub. The captain works through the sub's controls slowly to get you accustomed to them. You'll need to be quite familiar with the *Blackhawk's* controls later in the game.

Where the Heck Are We?

With all the globetrotting to exotic destinations that goes on in the spy business, it's only natural to learn a little geography along the way.

That's just what Broderbund had in mind when it designed the enormously popular *Carmen Sandiego* series, games that have become permanent fixtures in any number of classroom computer labs and home computer rooms.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?, **WHERE IN THE USA**, and **WHERE IN EUROPE** (\$49.95 each) take you, intrepid sleuth for the Acme Detective Agency, in search of the elusive master thief and



her henchmen. The games all use the same basic interface, so once kids have mastered one, getting used to another is quite simple.

Clues leading you to stolen artifacts are both engaging and informative. The whole time you're tearing around searching for Carmen's band and their loot,

With more countries and additional location photos, *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego? Deluxe Edition* is bound to be a success.

you'll be picking up geographic tidbits about all the places you visit.

WHERE IN TIME (\$49.95) ups the ante by adding historical flavor as well; in this game you'll also learn some history.

By the time you finish reading this article, Broderbund probably will have released a **WHERE**

IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SANDIEGO? DELUXE EDITION (\$79.95). It seems to be quite an improvement on an already impressive game.

Enhancements include digitized location photos, 15 additional countries, more than 1000 new clues, new animations, and extra map displays. The folks at Broderbund have worked on every aspect of the original *Carmen Sandiego*. That's quite a tall order, but they've done it again — beautifully.

For more information, contact Broderbund Software at 17 Paul Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903, (415) 492-3200.

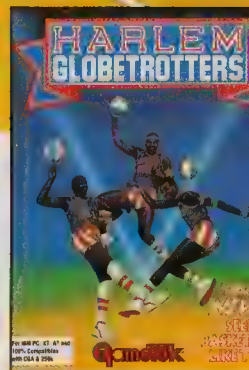
— L.L.

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You'll spend a lot of time on the submarine, so make sure to explore every nook and cranny. Providing you make it past the Russian ships and icebergs, you'll need many of the ship's items to complete your mission successfully and efficiently.

Journey under the sea in your scuba gear and sneak up on the terrorists who've kidnapped the ambassador.

Because this is a secret mission, the *Blackhawk* certainly can't surface and cruise into port; instead to bomb an oil rig you must leave the sub in scuba gear and swim into the harbor.

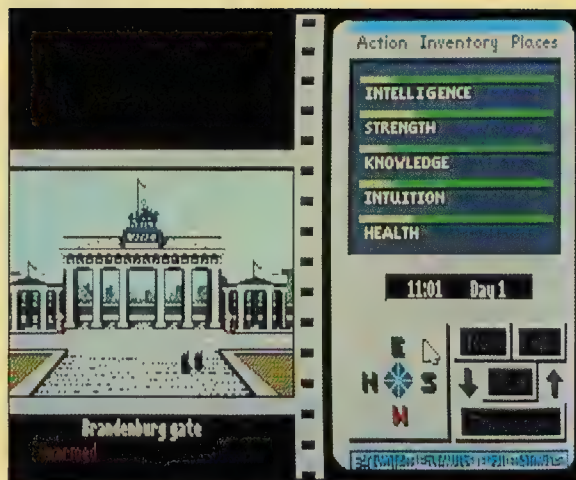
This portion isn't so much a diving simulation, however, as an extension of the mission underwater. Still, it's exciting to see Westland in dive gear swimming along under the sea.

The last page of the manual includes a walkthrough to get you started and to familiarize you with moving around the game. If you aren't used to this type of game, movement can be a bit daunting at first. Keep at it: The more you practice, the better you'll become.

Sierra has a 900 number for hints and publishes a series of hint books for its products. If you're at a standstill at any point during the game, both the book and the tips line will come in handy.

Codename: Iceman will provide you with long hours of gaming pleasure, especially considering the exploration that always accompanies such adventure games. The submarine-simulation aspect is a valuable addition, adding to the tension and immediacy of Iceman's mission.

Like a good Tom Clancy thriller, Codename: Iceman gives you an exciting and realistic storyline



Don't let *The Third Courier's* beautiful graphics screens take your mind off your mission. Secret agents have no time for sightseeing.

and puts you in the thick of the action with plenty of high-tech military hardware in all sorts of dangerous situations.

THE THIRD COURIER

The worst possible scenario has occurred. Of the three couriers carrying portions of NATO's top-secret defense plans, two are dead. You can only assume the third is heading for Moscow with the complete set of plans. Your mission, as a field operative for The Company (secret-agent jargon for the C.I.A.), is to find this traitorous agent and return the stolen defense plans.

As Moondancer (your code name), you'll start by creating your agent file with up to four separate identities. If a certain identity suits your current

Product Information

Codename: Iceman, \$59.95

Codename: Iceman Hint Book, \$7.95

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hard drive recommended

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OLYMPIC DECATHLON COMPETITION

Carl Lewis

GO FOR THE GOLD

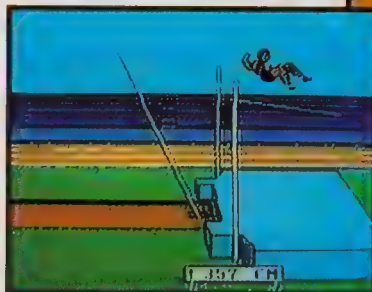


Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold is the ultimate computer challenge of skill and coordination. Compete in the Decathlon against Carl Lewis-the six time Olympic Gold medalist-or you can be Carl Lewis and try to live up to his world renowned reputation.

So, if you think that you're up to it; give it a try-Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold. It's guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.

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Screens shown are from the IBM version.

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situation, you can activate any of these four agent profiles at any time during the game. Your dossier files include a variety of character and personality traits, plus a detailed history of your background.

You'll be able to select where you spent most of your life (whether on a farm, in a small town, in the city, and so on), your cover occupation, favorite leisure activities, and your sex and age group.

You determine your character traits, including intelligence, strength, and intuition, from selections in the first part of your dossier. Personality traits are added to your folder as you progress.

You'll earn one positive and one negative trait with each level you attain.

Although you shouldn't judge your success by a numerical score, experience points will help you attain higher levels. Starting off as a sleuth, you'll be promoted to agent after gathering 25,000 points. After 40,000 points you'll become a resident agent; 60,000 points brings you up to spy; and after earning 75,000 points, you're a master spy.

See the Sights

The display you'll see as you're wandering around Berlin in search of the third courier is laid out clearly. The left side of the screen shows your viewpoint, whether you're out on the streets of Berlin or inside a building. The dialog box is above the viewing screen, and a status box is below it. The status box will tell you where you are, whether or not you have your weapon drawn, and so on. The game controls are on the right side of the screen.

Getting around is really quite easy. If you're using a keyboard, simply press *N*, *S*, *E*, and *W* to go north, south, east, and west. If you're using a mouse or joystick, select the direction in which you want to travel from the compass display in the lower-right corner of the screen. Take care to notice, however, that the top of the screen isn't always north; the top of the compass indicates the direction you're facing.

Besides these features, there are the inventory menu, the action menu, and a collection of meters to keep you posted on the status of your character traits and health. Pay attention: If you're tired or hungry, or if you've scuffled with a Berlin street critter, the meters will keep you informed.

The on-screen images of Berlin are beautiful. I almost had as much fun wandering around sightseeing as I did completing the mission at hand.

There's a handy, easy-to-read map of both sectors of Berlin to help you in your travels. Hang on to it, because you'll certainly need it as you explore a number of districts on both sides. Examine the palace, park, industrial, market, and Tempelhof districts of the west and the government and cultural districts in the east. East Berlin is also the home of Marx-Engels Plaza and the historic and beautiful Brandenburg Gate.

Don't be too overwhelmed by the old city's historic beauty, however. You have a job to do and there are people out there who want to prevent you from doing it, particularly in East Berlin. Be extremely careful in your travels. Your assignment is serious, so trust no one.

Even if you don't encounter an Eastern-bloc agent who knows you're not in Berlin for the sightseeing, you may still run into a nasty border guard, a mugger, or some drunk looking for a brawl. Be aware and you won't run into any unpleasant surprises.

At one point, for example, I had drawn my weapon, but had forgotten to put it back in the holster. As I wandered around, I ended up by the Berlin Wall. (It was still there when Accolade produced *The Third Courier*.) The border guard wasn't too pleased that I was strolling around Berlin with my Smith & Wesson in hand.

The Third Courier is among the first group of adventure games to come from Accolade, known for its sports games and simulations. For a first leap into a new genre, however, the company has done it right. The Third Courier captures the flavor and intrigue of an undercover assignment in an age when East and West didn't meet.

If you get stuck wandering around the streets of Berlin without a clue, Accolade publishes a hint book for *The Third Courier*. Unless you're incredibly patient, amazingly persistent, and inordinately clever, hint books for any adventure game are well worth the few extra bucks.

IN FROM THE COLD

Whatever type of spy you'd like to be — a cool, confident, and daring James Bond protege, a military operative with all sorts of high-tech hardware at your disposal, or a seasoned professional agent as in so many Robert Ludlum novels — at least one of these titles is sure to suit your taste.

Even in the climate of thawing relations between East and West, this type of cloak-and-dagger stuff still makes for exciting movies, novels, and computer games. The assignments are in — which mission will you choose? □



**Apprehend the
traitor and find
the stolen plans
— only then will
your mission
in *The Third
Courier* be
complete.**



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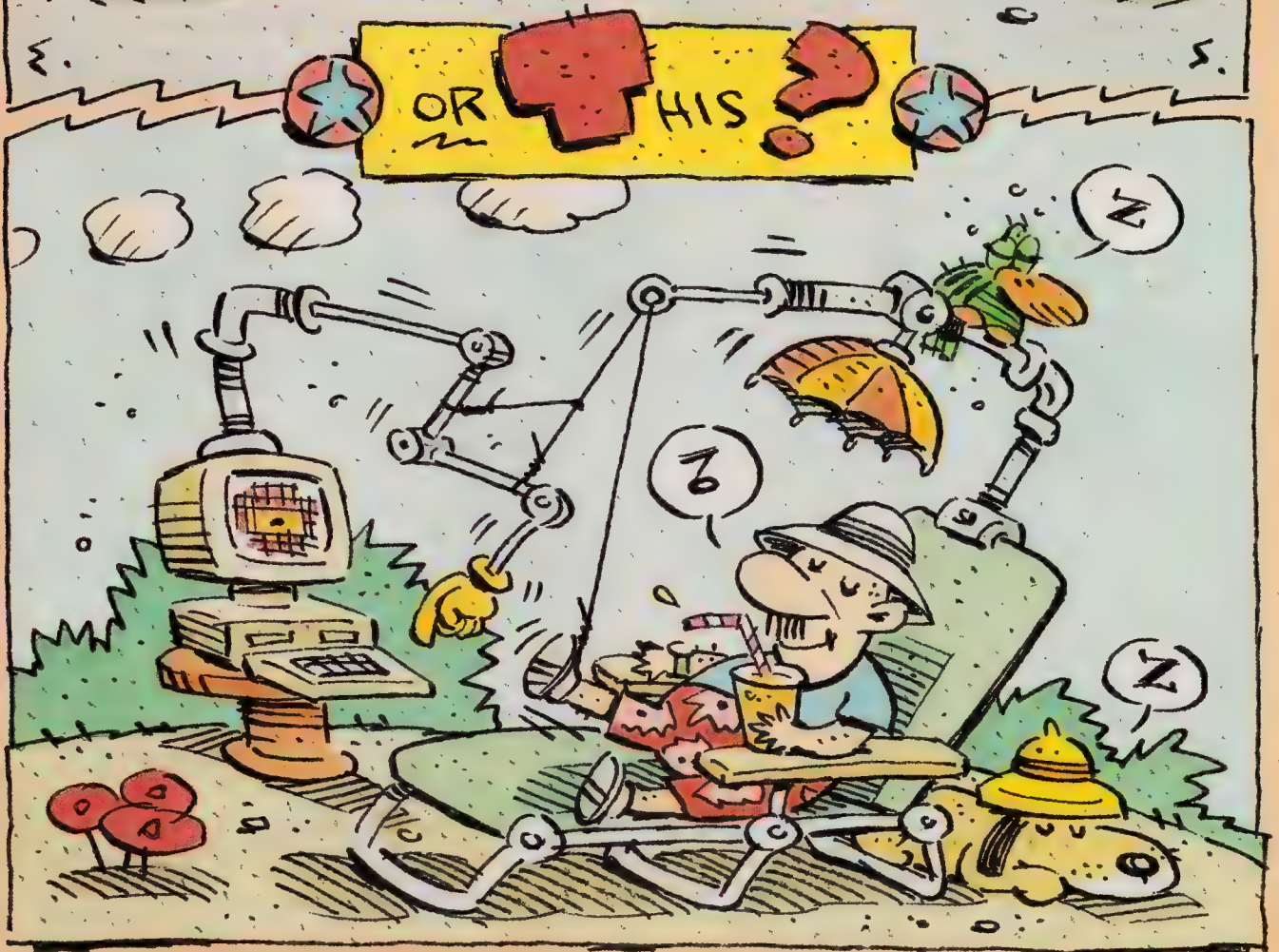
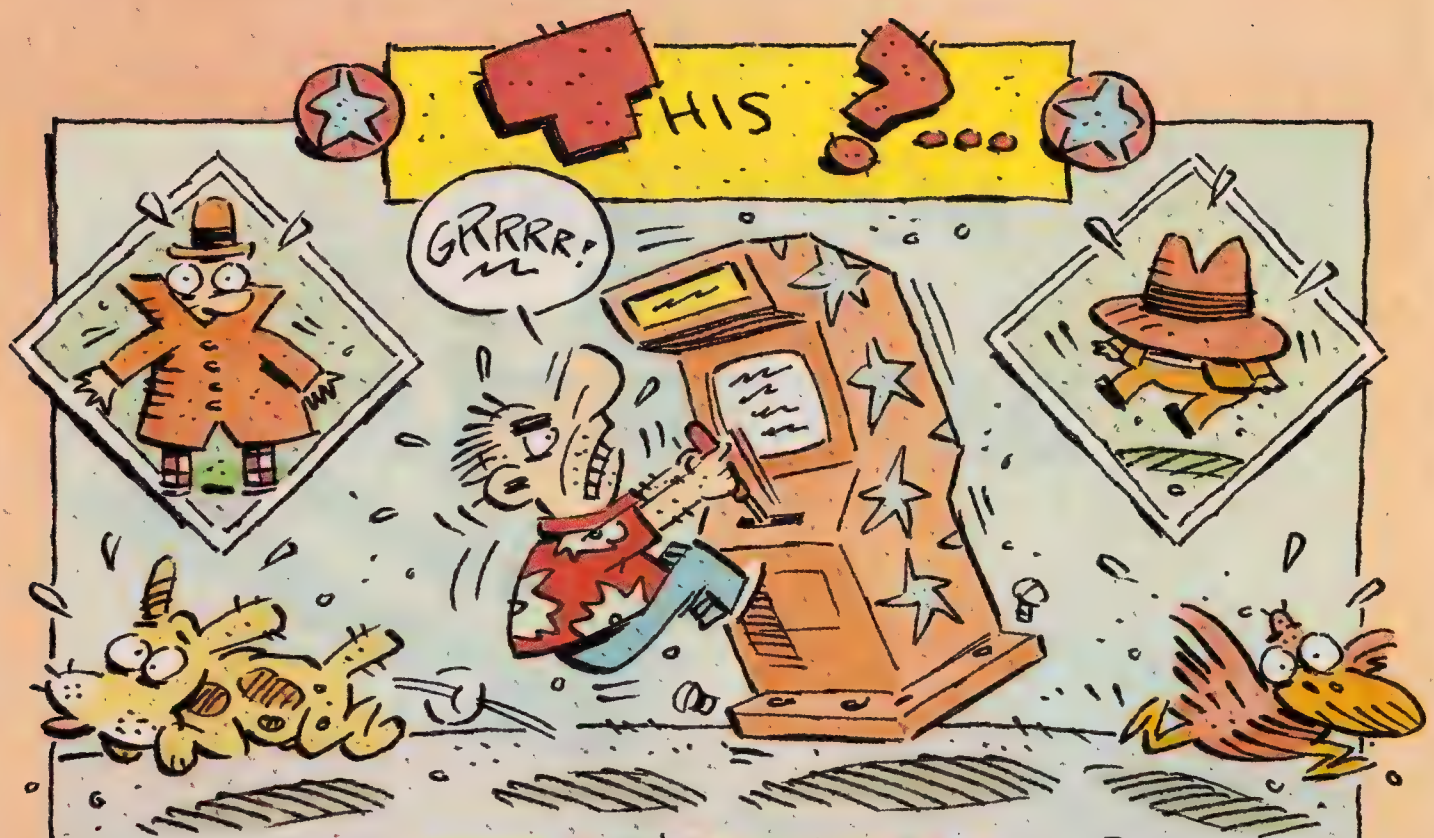


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PUZZLE

GAMES

CHILL OUT, COOL DOWN, LIGHTEN UP

It's a dog-eat-dog world out there at the arcades — so a nice round of a brain-teasing puzzle game may be just the thing you need to help you unwind.

When life's hectic pace has you frazzled and the breakneck speed of shoot-'em-up arcade games makes you crazy, give yourself a break. A nice way to escape the maddening fury of reality and the incessant action of blasting space critters is to delve into a puzzle game.

Are they kids-only, you ask? No way — this is no repackaged preschool jigsaw we're talking about here. We're talking about strategy, quick thinking, and flawless coordination. Today's computerized puzzle games will challenge you for hours, tease your brain 'til you get it right, and addict you for days at a time.

To prove that puzzle games are a satisfying change of pace, you only have to look at the popularity of such standards as Shanghai and Tetris. And as the renown of this genre continues to grow, more fish will jump in the pond. So throw in your line and catch puzzle-game fever with Accolade's **Ishido: The Way of Stones**, Spectrum Holobyte's **Faces**, or Taito's **Puzznic**.

ISHIDO: THE WAY OF STONES

The leader of the new strategy/puzzle-game releases is Ishido: The

Way of Stones. Bringing with it a simple set of rules and a complex set of strategies, Ishido will have the same attraction and staying power as Shanghai and Tetris.

Ishido's subtitle, *The Way of Stones*, tells you its focus — in a zen sort of way. You have 72 stones to place on a board of 96 squares. The set includes a pair of stones in six patterns and colors. When you begin you'll see six stones already in place: one at each corner of the board and two in the center. Each time you start the game you'll see different colored stones; every pattern and color will always be represented, though. No matter the ◀

By Rick Teverbaugh

DINO WARS



DigiTek Software

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR AN INVASION — prehistoric, at that — of strategy, adventure and education! Discover a time when dinosaurs ruled the world — relive battles and fights so captivating and realistic, you'll swear you lived among them!

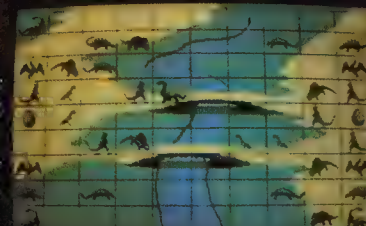
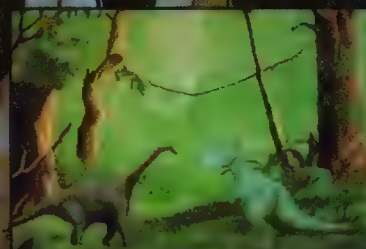
This one or two player strategy boardgame, complete with action-adventure elements and an extensive, animated encyclopedia, features amazing digitized sounds right on disk and full sound card support. Massive, animated dinosaurs (covering 2/3 of the screen) are brought to life in dazzling VGA 256 color graphics.

"...OUTSTANDING..." —PC GAMES

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Retail price: \$39.95. See your local software retailer or call **1-800-783-8023** to order.

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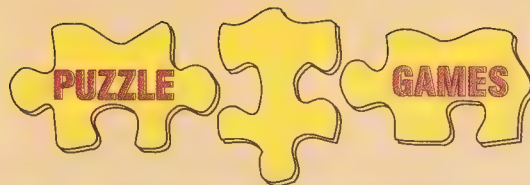
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color or design of your first stone, you'll find a match on the board.

The object of Ishido is to score points by placing like-colored or like-designed stones next to each other. Because one-sided matches are easy (you simply match two stones of similar color or design) they count for the fewest number of points.

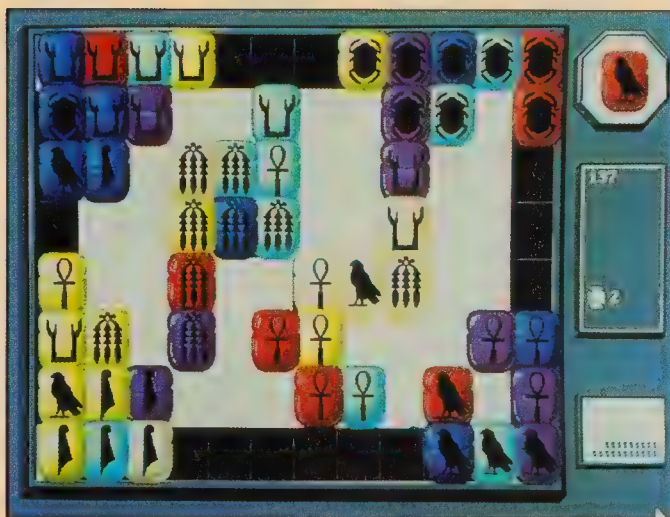
Matches involving two, three, or four adjoining sides are more difficult. They require a great deal of strategic setup, and boost your total number of points significantly. In a two-sided match, one side must match the color while the other matches the pattern. In a three-sided play you must match the color on two sides and the pattern on the other (or the pattern on two sides and the color on the other).

A four-way match is your toughest challenge because your stone must match the color of two adjoining stones while matching the pattern of the other two. Not only is a four-way move worth bonus points, but it can also lead you to the Oracle.

This visionary of the Orient is no hokey dime-store eight-ball that gives you random answers; instead, the Oracle's responses to your questions about life's trials and tribulations are based on the *I Ching*, the Chinese *Book of Changes*.

The Test of Time

You can play Ishido in either the *ancient* or *modern* variation. Each has a different method of scoring and a different objective. In the ancient way of play, you try to empty the pouch of stones and place them on the board. If you're playing against an opponent, you must empty the pouch of stones, then try to make a greater number of four-way matches. If neither of you



Ishido: simple rules, complex strategy.

can empty the entire pouch, the winner is the one with the higher number of four-way matches.

In Ishido's modern variation, you simply try to accumulate the larger number of points. Because you earn

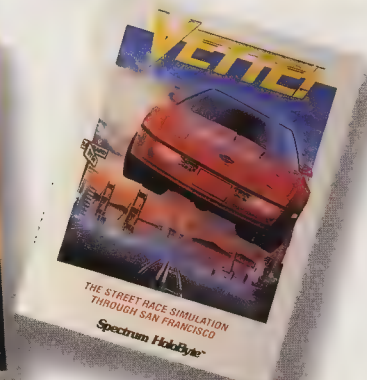
placing stones on the board to achieve a team score. In a tournament game, you and a number of opponents (one of whom can be the computer) play identical games — each player draws the same stones in the same order. ➔

more points for four-way matches, try to make as many as possible.

The Zen of Strategy

Four game modes are included, as well — *solitaire*, *cooperative*, *tournament*, and *challenge*. In the solitaire game you use the Ishido board in a personal challenge. In a cooperative game (a true representation of the zen nature of Ishido's philosophy), you and another player, or you and the computer, take turns

DRIVE IT



Race through loop-the-loops, corkscrew jumps and other death-defying obstacles. Compete against the world's top drivers in your turbo-charged Corvette. If you've played the new STUNT DRIVER™ or VETTE!™ from Spectrum HoloByte, you know the only thing more thrilling than our simulations is *the real experience...*

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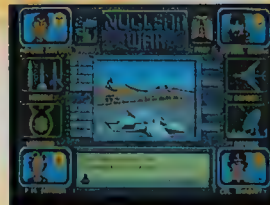
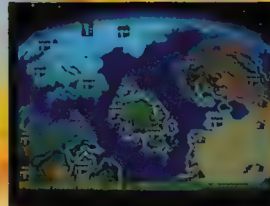
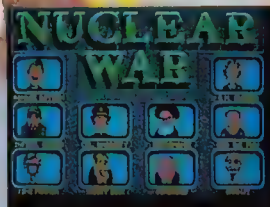
Howl into battle with a legendary hero as master criminal plots the downfall of the four Continents. Your only hope, find and return the King's stolen Sceptre of Order before he runs out!

A mind-boggling game of strategy and tactics, King's Bounty will keep you on the edge of your seat!

Available for the Apple II, IBM, Commodore 64, Macintosh, and Amiga computers.

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NUCLEAR WAR



Lead your country to global supremacy while fending off nuclear strikes, propaganda attacks, and such oddities as earthquakes, 16-Ton Weights, and mysterious aliens. Select your opponents from a list of comical leaders like Malomar Kadaffy, Tricky Dick, and Ronnie Raygun.

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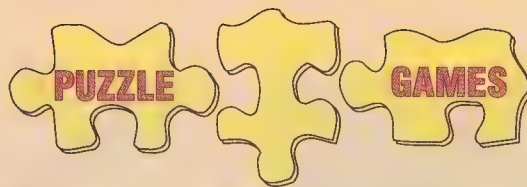
Ask for King's Bounty and Nuclear War at your local dealer or order direct from New World Computing, Inc.

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NEW WORLD COMPUTING, INC.
INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE

P.O. Box 2068, Van Nuys, CA 91404
Technical Support (818) 999-0607



In a challenge game, you and another player (either human or the computer) take turns placing stones on the board to complete the same game. At the end of the game, each player is given a separate score relative to the stones he or she (or it, if one of the players is the computer) has placed on the board.

Once a game is over — when you can't make another legal move, or you or your opponent has played the final stone — the computer tallies your score. (If you're good, the program will add your name to the best scores of the day and of all time.) At the end of each game, the program treats you to an attractive fireworks display.

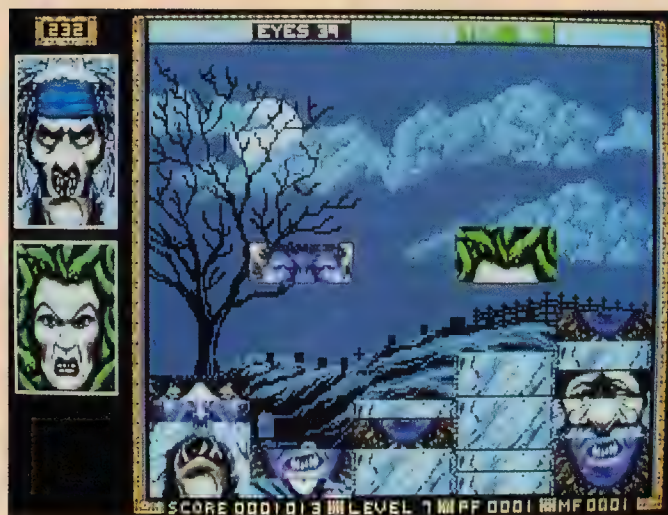
No matter how many times you play within a day, even if you reboot the computer, the program keeps track of the day's scores and the all-time high scores. At any time you can erase these scores from the board.

The Beauty of the Orient

For a fascinating change of scenery, you can switch both the game boards and the stone sets. Choose from five game boards — wood, marble, ebony, Oriental, and Egyptian. In VGA graphics, those first three are beautifully rendered and so realistic you'd swear your screen was cast in stone and mahogany.

The various stone sets are equally ornate and fabulously artistic. Choose from the vibrantly colorful ginza, the classic ishido stone carvings, the art-deco inner shapes, the traditional Oriental chungfu, the Egyptian-styled pieces, or a set you design with the stone-set editor.

The menu system (which you can get to by pressing the escape key) makes it easy to get help on possible



Faces: adding some character to the Tris series.

moves, check high scores, set modes and styles of play, or save your games.

With intricate stone carvings and elaborate shades of color, the Ishido stones and game boards are indeed quite gorgeous. Between the detailed

graphics images and the captivating game play with its numerous strategies, *Ishido: The Way of Stones* will capture your imagination and hold it for a long time to come.

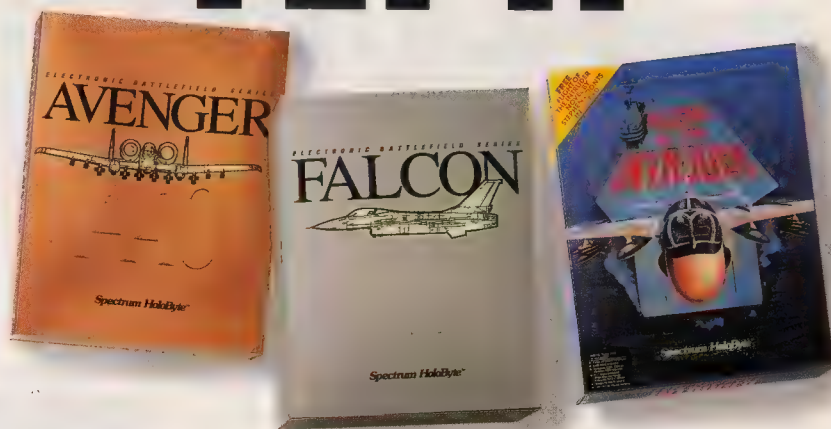
Faces: Tris III

Alexey Pajitnov, the designer of Tetris and Welltris, has put together another new entry that deserves our praise. In *Faces*, the third game in the Tetris series, you try to put together parts of

famous faces as they fall from the top of the screen.

Each face is divided into five segments that you must arrange in this order: chin, lips, nose, eyes, and top. Although you'll earn more points ➤

FLY IT



Command your own squadron and feel the awesome power of the afterburners, the thrill of mixing it up with a MiG and the total satisfaction of an accomplished mission.

Experience Spectrum HoloByte's *FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER™*, and the new *FALCON 3.0™* and *A-10 AVENGER™*, the most realistic air combat simulations ever created.

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Before the LAPC-1 Music Card



After the LAPC-1 Music Card

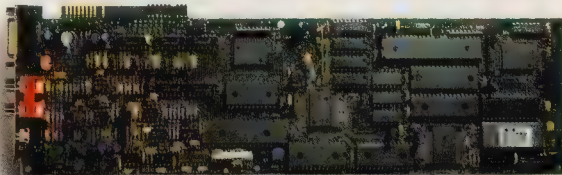
Actual results may vary.

If we were you, we sure as heck wouldn't run out and buy an LAPC-1 without knowing something about what it does. So if you give us a moment, we'll tell you.

The LAPC-1 is a music synthesizer card which, when you stick it into your computer, takes the pitifully anemic sounds computer games offer up and turns them into something quite extraordinary. Or, to put it another way, instead of going "plink" the way it does now, your computer will go "KA-PHLOOM" the way it's supposed to. And as luck and our ingenious engineers would have it, it'll do all this with the games from Sierra®, Activision®, MediaGenic®, Lucasfilm®, Access®, MicroProse®, and nearly everybody else.

And since the LAPC-1 uses the same L/A Synthesis circuitry we put in our professional musical equipment, combined with the only true MIDI interface on the market, it also provides you with something else—access to all of the tools you need for creating incredibly realistic music as well.

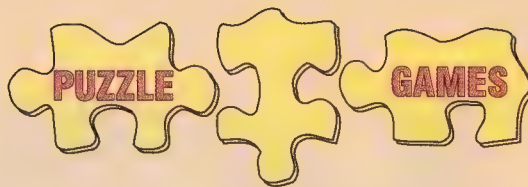
There. We're done. Now you can run out and buy one.



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arranging the segments to form a famous character's face, you can also form a mixed face. Put together a face, for example, with Napoleon Bonaparte's forehead, Ghengis Khan's scary eyes, MacArthur's prominent nose, Queen Elizabeth's lips, and Lenin's chin. Once you complete a mixed face it moves off to the left side of the screen and you score points.

If you put down segments out of order (a chin, then a nose without the lips, for example) the pieces turn to stone and start piling up. When the pile reaches the top of the screen, one round of the game is over.

Unlike the original Tetris or Welltris, in this game, even if you goof, your move stays in position until the end of the round. The pieces fall two at a time; you can move them to the left or right, swap them from one side to the other, or flip them, placing a character's chin on someone else's face.

Face Up

Each face represents a different character or personality. Each level, or category, contains a different number of personalities you must put together. In both of the first two levels, *Universal Faces* and *Modern World Figures*, you must put together four personalities.

In both of the next two levels, *Faces from Art* and *Scientists*, you must complete five different personalities. In the *Musicians* and *Historical Americans* categories, you can create six characters, while in *Literary Figures* and *Monsters* you put together seven personalities.

The most difficult categories, *Historical Figures* and *American Holidays*, each give you eight characters to develop. As you advance to successive levels, you'll encounter faster-falling pieces.

After you've played against the computer, try tournament mode and compete with up to ten players. Each player can play his or her round until

the stone pillar of unused face segments reaches the top of the screen. You can set the time limit and give worthy competitors a run for their money. There's also an advanced mode that makes the segments fall even faster.

If you have a modem or a null-modem cable, you and another gamer can engage in fierce competition in head-to-head mode. Each time you complete a perfect face, half your unused segments are transferred to your opponent.

Of course, you'll receive your opponent's segments when he or she completes a perfect face. If you tire of the game's faces, and you need a change of pace, you can use a graphics program to edit the personalities. Although these changes are temporary, you can save your scores.

Faces should be a success, given the number of existing Tetris and Welltris

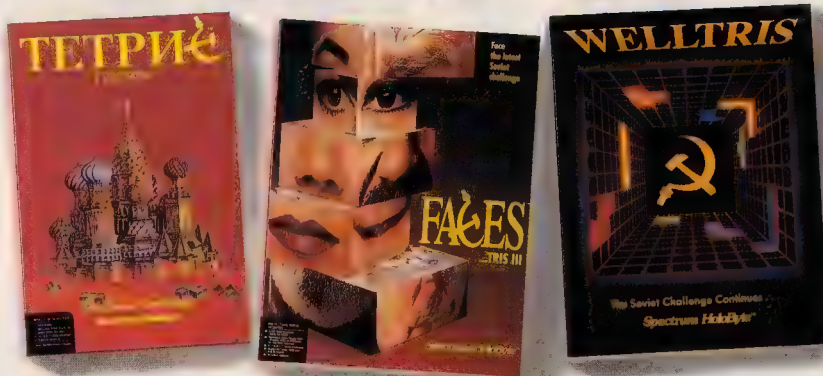
addicts. The game isn't as creatively challenging as Tetris or Welltris, but it's just as addictive and fun.

Puzznic

In *Puzznic*, Taito's recent release in the puzzle-game genre, you must maneuver pieces of similar design next to one another and remove them from the screen. Although this game sounds like a winner, I'm not sure how you'll react to entertainment software that gets tough so quickly.

There are eight different types of puzzle pieces you can match — spheres, cubes, pentagons, cones, diamonds, cylinders, triangles, and grids. You can move the pieces across the screen or let them fall through the framework of each puzzle. If you hop on a vertical or horizontal elevator block, you can use the keyboard or a joystick to move the pieces.

PLAY IT



From the Soviet Union, birthplace of the world's Grand Master Chess Champions, comes premier game designer Alexey Pajitnov and his TETRIS™, WELLTRIS™ and FACES™.

The rules of chess can be explained in minutes. The game itself takes a lifetime to master. Now, let the deceptively simple 'Tris series fascinate and addict you with its endless intrigues.

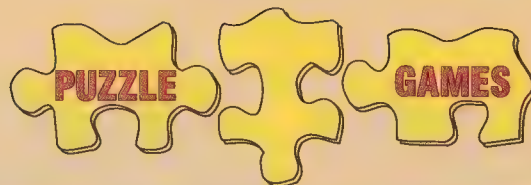
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As with most puzzle games, the clock is your worst enemy, creating a pace that some may find too hectic. You have a limited amount of time in which to work on each level. (There are eight levels and 144 puzzles to solve.) The timer will warn you when 30 seconds and ten seconds remain. If you don't finish the puzzle before your time expires, you can choose the *continue* option to keep working on the puzzle, but you lose your score.

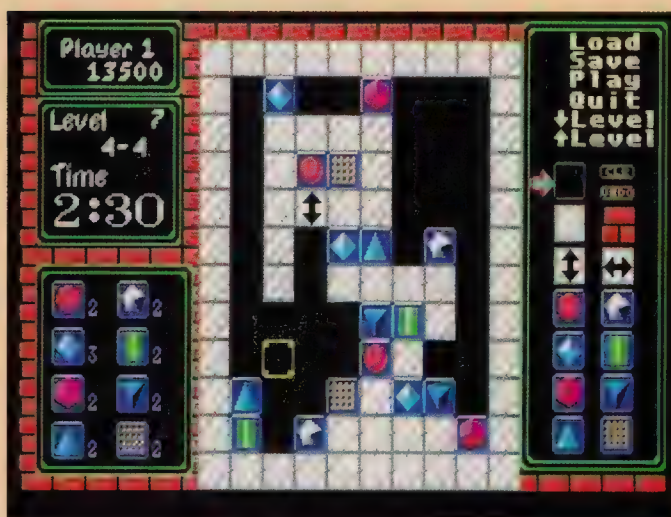
Some screens have sets of three pieces, meaning that you have to match all three at once without getting two of them together first. If you match only two of the set, you'll be stuck with the remaining piece. If you make a serious mistake, you have two chances to restart the current puzzle.

You earn 100 points for every pair of blocks you remove from the screen, and 200 points for every set of three. You can also earn bonus points for finishing a puzzle without using the *retry* or *continue* option; for leaving time remaining on the clock; for clear-

ing four or more blocks at once; and for creating several matches by moving just one block.

Falling Short

The second or third time I played the game I began to solve the first screens of each level quickly; however, the game moved rapidly to screens and levels I couldn't solve. Trying to get three pieces to the same spot at the same time would be a unique challenge if the clock didn't tick away.



Time's the enemy in Puzznic, so get tough.

If you end up matching two pieces when there are three in a puzzle set, you might as well relax and watch the time run out, because you won't be able to solve that screen anyway. Even the documentation is little help in clearing up any confusion — it includes no examples and only a few illustrations.

The real strength of the program is its versatility. With *Puzznic's Construction Set*, you can create your own puzzles and save them for later play. You

may want to try developing puzzles that are less challenging, so you'll become less frustrated. *Puzznic* is based on some good ideas, but for the uninitiated, it may be a source of confusion. Enter at your own risk.

While all three of these games are a visually intriguing, brain-teasing form of entertainment, they're also incredibly addictive. If you have a keen mind and lightning-fast reactions, any one of these games will keep you busy for hours. And, of course, a little luck never hurts. □

Product Information

Ishido: The Way of Stones

Accolade
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Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700
\$54.95
512K IBM PC, XT, AT,
Tandy 1000 series,
3000, 4000, and compatibles
CGA/EGA/MCGA/Hercules/
Tandy 16-color (requires 640K)/
VGA (requires hard drive or 3.5-inch drive)
mouse optional
off-disk copy protection

Faces: Tris III

Spectrum Holobyte
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512K IBM PC, Tandy 1000,
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CGA/EGA/256-color MCGA/
Tandy 16-color/Hercules/
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Puzznic

Taito Software, Inc.
267 West Esplanade
North Vancouver, BC
Canada V7M 1A5
(604) 984-3344
\$39.95
512K IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2,
Tandy 1000, and compatibles
requires DOS 2.1 or higher
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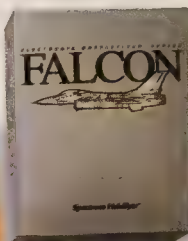
Master the challenge of professional racing as you pilot a lightning-quick Van Diemen Formula Ford around historic Laguna Seca Raceway.



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Win a week for two in Southern California, including a 1/2-day aerial dogfighting course for one at the nation's only civilian Top Gun school, Air Combat USA.

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HOW TO ENTER

Official entry forms with complete contest rules can be found at your nearest participating software dealer and in specially marked Spectrum HoloByte packages. Contest runs from 11/1/90 to 2/28/91, and you must be 18 or older to enter. No purchase necessary.

Spectrum HoloByte™

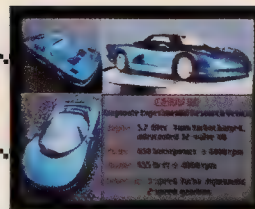
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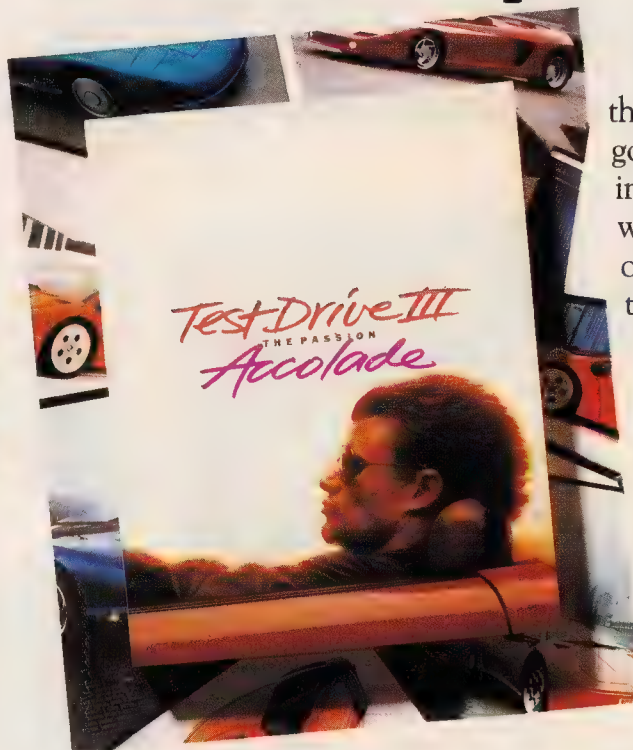
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It's totally new. Totally hot. And it'll totally blow the doors off of any driving simulation on the market.

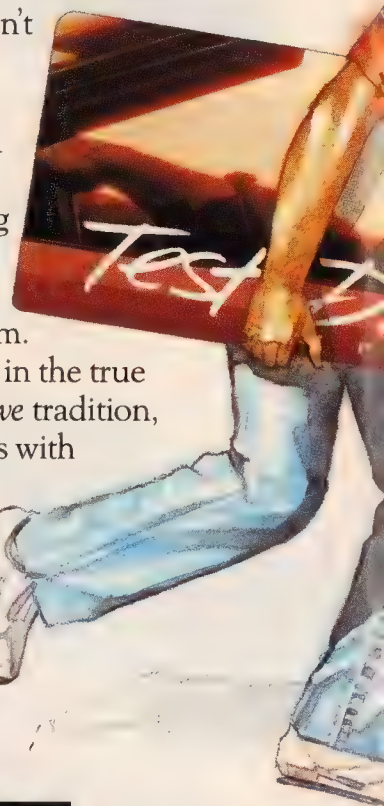
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And in the true Test Drive tradition, TDIII comes with incredible cars.

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Race head-to-head against the computer on branching roads that offer cross traffic, long tunnels and ocean straightaways.



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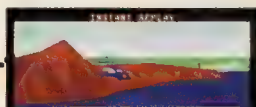
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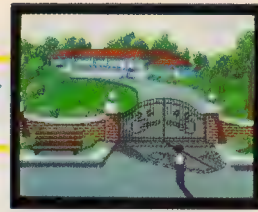
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"He Ain't Nothing But a Corn Dog." Can a man who wears polyester slacks and "Alf" pajamas impress the stunning Stella Hart?

"Heartbroke Motel?" Help Les Manley solve engaging puzzles. See genuine felt paintings. Animation so real your hips will gyrate.



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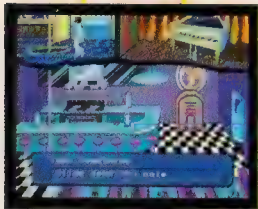
Hold on to your parser. Accolade

is about to redefine the world of animated graphic adventures with two phenomenal new games.

First, meet a hero who finds his clothes at K-Mart and his dates at Radio Shack. *Search for The King™* places you on the heels of Les Manley as he rocks 'n rolls across America in



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"I Can't Help Falling In Holes For You." Hot music. Hot colors. Hot dang. *Search for The King* recognizes over 1500 words.



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"Lift Me Tender." Want more? Get Les. Over 70 bit mapped screens make *Search for The King* one heavy animated graphic adventure.

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One minute you're a guy eating nacho-flavored popcorn. The next, you're sucked through your TV into a fantastic alien world.



Welcome, fellow traveler, to the Canyons of Fear. Put away the reality you've known. You won't be needing it on this trip.



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Enter a marvelous universe teaming with wraiths, fluboxes and exotic creatures and landscapes. There's a deep mystery here—and only you can help P.J. solve it.

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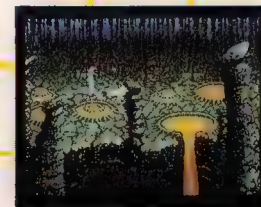


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Discover the hidden pits. Altered Destiny immerses you in a realm of incredible landscapes. This definitely isn't Kansas.



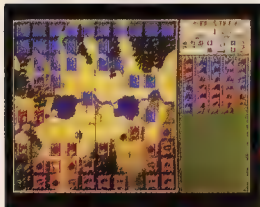
Meet Alnar the Metal Shaper. Altered Destiny surrounds you with unimaginable lifeforms. It's like no game you've ever seen.



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IBM PC



Enjoy three game boards: original, classic and modern. Stratego has single battle or 5-battle campaigns – even digitized sounds.

"The greatest battlefield strategy game of all time."



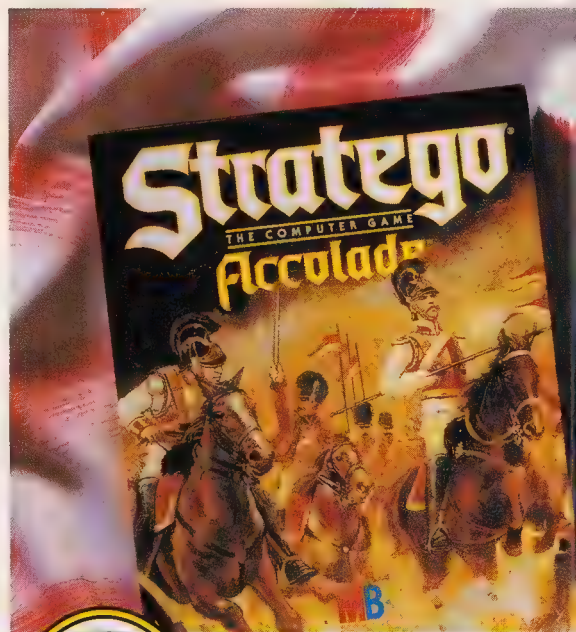
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War &

The intensity of combat.
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that share a common bond – superlative strategy.

Stratego® captures all the thrill of the classic battlefield board game from Milton Bradley. Now, there are more options, choices and features. Deploy your army, plan your advance, attack and capture the enemy flag. One match against the computer, and you'll see why Stratego is called "the greatest battlefield strategy game of all time."



Play Traditional and Tournament rules, including Silent Defense, Aggressor Advantage and Rescue. Comes with multiple piece sets.



Ishido™ summons forth *The Way of Stones* and returns it to the world after thousands of years. This ancient game and beautiful puzzle recalls

Play the computer with 5 levels of ability from sergeant to field marshal. Select from a library of battle formations or make your own.



MAC II



MAC II

Actual game screens from IBM PC and Mac II.
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IBM PC



Play a power game to amass points and compete against the clock. Play for elegance, meditating over each move like a true master.

MAC II



See if you can empty the pouch and discover the secret of 4-Ways. Let the oracle reward you with answers to your innermost questions

Peace

an uncommon bond — Accolade.

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"... a first-class strategy game in the 'minute to learn, a lifetime to master' tradition."

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ISHIDO
The Way of Stones



the depth of chess and the simplicity of Go. Call upon your deepest powers of concentration to match 72 stones on a board of 96 squares.

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MAC II



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The twin-jet Me 262 unleashed a volley of 24 air-to-air missiles in less than a tenth of a second. It's



just one of the little-known aircraft you'll encounter in *Secrets Weapons of the Luftwaffe*.™ You'll also blast off at 16,000 feet per minute in the incredible Me 163 Komet rocket fighter. And pilot the remarkable Gotha 229, which bore an uncanny

resemblance to today's Stealth bomber. **Were the Allies saved by Hitler's blunder?**

As you'll read in the 224-page historical manual, Hitler's demand for a blitz bomber delayed deployment of the Me 262s as fighters.

In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, you can reverse that decision. And pit these

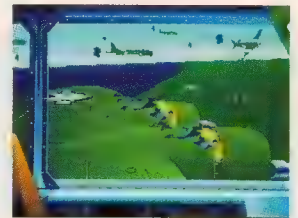
revolutionary weapons with the more familiar German Bf 109 and FW 190 fighters against the Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortresses, P-51 Mustangs, and P-47 Thunderbolts. All technically, historically, and graphically authentic.

Fly in the face of danger.

Desperate to stop the massive daylight bombing raids of the Allies, the Germans rushed their experimental aircraft

into service in late 1944. You'll experience the nail-biting terror of piloting aircraft that were as dangerous to fly as they were to the enemy.

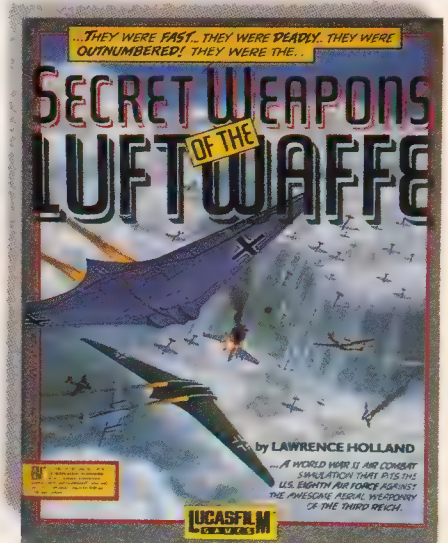
You'll rock with the impact of a direct hit. Struggle for visibility through oil smeared, bullet-shattered canopies. Watch in horror as your engine burns. And wrestle for control against G-forces and rough wind conditions. All with the vivid realism of bit-mapped 256-color VGA graphics and room-rattling sound effects.



In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, you'll do more than relive the air combat over Germany from 1943 to 1945. You'll decide for yourself whether these exotic superweapons could have changed the outcome of the war.

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Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is available for IBM and 100% compatibles. Visit your retailer or order directly with Visa/MC by calling 1-800-STARWARS (in Canada 1-800-828-7927). ™ and © 1990 LucasArts Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc.

BALANCE OF THE PLANET

By H.E. Dille

With the release of *Balance of the Planet*, Chris Crawford adds another "significant subject" to the ranks of entertainment software. This fun-filled simulation addresses the environmental crisis head on, unflinching in the face of radioactive waste and acid BOTP-2 rain.

As the High Commissioner of the Environment, a position created by the United Nations, you must stop Mother Earth's civilization from committing matricide. In this capacity, you set the taxation rates on certain sectors of industry and use the proceeds to finance projects that'll have a positive impact on the environment. Don't underestimate the tasks at hand: When you make decisions about levying taxes, you must consider the relationships among about 150 distinct environmental factors, ranging from acid rain to nuclear accidents to global warming.

Four pre-established political points of view — Pro-Environment, Pro-Industrial, Pro-Third World, and Pro-Nuclear — give you a variety of playing options. The environmental bias sees the preservation of biodiversity (the multitude of species found on Earth) as most important. The industrial bias emphasizes the need for research and development to meet the material demands of a growing population and to overcome environmental problems, such as global warming. The third-world bias asserts

that all human life is equally valuable, and downplays disparities between northern and southern lifestyles. (In fact, with this view the looming problem of world hunger overshadows other environmental issues.) The nuclear bias contends that BOTP-3 is the earth's only solution to future energy needs. (This viewpoint ignores radioactive halflife of disposed waste.)

These biases are governed by formulas you can manipulate and save in a new file. For example, when designing this game Crawford incorporated a study suggesting that four people per year would die maintaining roof-mounted solar energy systems. If you think this number is

Play centers around two major screens. The policy-summary screen displays your taxation and appropriation efforts, while the results screen summarizes the major point shifts within the previous five-year turn. From these screens, players branch out into the cause-and-effect screens that show the details of a particular factor, such as biotechnological research (which can increase the number of crop strains and medicines available) or the level of BOTP-4 desertification (the rate at which arable lands are being destroyed by overgrazing, deforestation, and poor farming techniques). Each of these screens contains utilitarian graphics



This cause-and-effect screen in *Balance of the Planet* explains the global gene pool.

high, change it to two instead of four, so that the program won't penalize your score drastically as the popularity of solar energy increases. Although you can manipulate many aspects of this game freely, be forewarned that radical and illogical tampering with complex interrelated issues can produce unplayable bias files.

and text to illustrate the concept and its cause-and-effect issues, as well as a progressive bar chart, analyzing the impact you've had in an area.

Balance of the Planet is both fun and engrossing. You'll be captivated by the discovery of cause-and-effect relationships you never knew existed, and spend hours plotting a single ◊

turn. Some gamers who make only minor alterations and merely cycle the game through the allotted eight turns, however, will be disappointed. Their scores will become progressively smaller and the game will end in about 15 minutes. Balance of the Planet transcends the traditional definition of a game. Players will get out of it what they put into it.

Accolade, 550 South Winchester Boulevard, Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95128, (800) 245-7744; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/VGA/EGA; keyboard or mouse; no copy protection; \$49.95

DRAGONSTRIKE

By James V. Trunzo

The sky looked so much bluer and the sun so much brighter from the back of the silver dragon. Karn adjusted himself in the padded leather seat of Ulaina's saddle and pivoted the deadly dragonlance in its mount. With gentle pressure from his knees, he urged Ulaina downward until she caught a strong air current, letting her glide southward instead of using her strength to flap her huge wings.

The beauty of the day belied the danger of the times, and Karn realized how easy it would be to forget about his task. The Solamic knights had sighted ships flying the Black Dragon crest of the Dark Queen. Karn had been ordered to locate the ships and report on their progress.

Late in the afternoon he spotted them. Flying high overhead, Karn and his powerful silver dragon made a pass over the ships. They were definitely from Neraka. Karn's assignment had been simply to scout and report, but the newly ordained Knight of the Crown patted the neck of Ulaina and spoke to her softly, "My beauty, fill thy lungs with thy icy

breath. We'll take the ships ourselves!"

If this sounds like a scene from an Advanced Dungeons and Dragons (AD&D) DragonLance adventure, guess again. It's Strategic Simulations Inc.'s (S.S.I.'s) latest AD&D computer game, DragonStrike.

DragonStrike is an incredibly realistic flight simulator. But instead of flying an F-14 Strike Eagle or a stealth bomber, you fly a bronze, silver, or gold dragon; rather than aerial combat against other planes, you fly

To be successful in this game, you must know your enemy's strengths and weaknesses, too. Wyverns, for example, have no breath weapon, so you can hit them easily, but they possess a powerful bite and a poisonous stinger. Manticores attack both with claws and bite, and they can hurl deadly tail spikes.

Enemy dragons come in various sizes and types, too. They range from the relatively weak white dragons to the infamous and powerful red.



In DragonStrike, you and your flying dragon swoop down on the enemy.

against wyverns, draconians, and evil dragons; instead of strafing ground troops, anti-aircraft batteries, and munitions plants, you swoop down on skiffs, warships, enemy encampments, and flying citadels.

The game is as exciting and as challenging as it sounds. Each good dragon has inherent strengths and weaknesses, and others it acquires. You can enter combat with one of three kinds of dragons. Each type is rated for its ability to climb, dive, and bank, as well as for its speed, defense, and ability to effect damage in an attack. All dragons can attack with claws and bite, and each has two appropriate breath weapons, such as lighting and repulsion gas, cone of cold and paralysis, or cone of fire and chlorine.

There's even one with a fatal death gas and a 200-foot body.

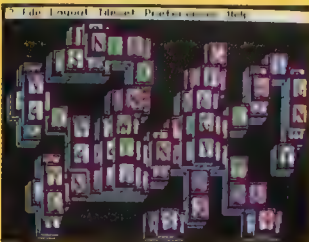
During combat you'll have to take your enemy's flight skills into consideration. Although wyverns have only average climbing ability and speed, they turn quickly and bank well. On the other hand, some evil dragons have a below-average turning ability, but excellent speed. Don't be surprised to approach a wyvern rapidly, only to have it twist out of your path fast and sting you as you fly past.

Non-aerial targets aren't defenseless either. Dozens of archers protect ships, camps, and flying citadels, and can fire a barrage of arrows against both you and your dragon. How you approach these targets is critical, because you don't want to overexpose your dragon's unprotected belly. ☞

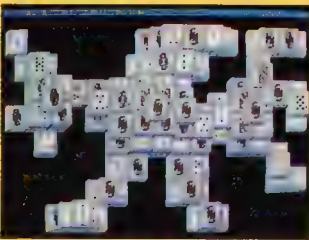
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And at the heart of *Shanghai II*, you'll find Dragon's Eye. It's the ultimate challenge, even for the most cunning and seasoned *Shanghai* player.

Shanghai II features 8 beautifully detailed tile sets . . . over a dozen layouts based on the Chinese zodiac . . . and a Layout Construction Set, for devising an endless variety of original formations.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye. It will beguile your days and nights. Demand your concentration. Become your obsession.

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You can play DragonStrike with a keyboard, or a joystick/keyboard or mouse/keyboard combination. As you direct your dragon through the sky, you must also control speed, altitude, and breath weapons. The game's beautiful three-dimensional fractal-graphics images make you feel as if you're flying as you view your surroundings from the back of your dragon.

Function keys switch your viewpoint, letting you look to either side or behind. Scrolling is smooth and your perspective adds to the illusion of flight. Flying your dragon isn't easy, however, and you may become frustrated until you learn this new form of flying and fighting.

Although DragonStrike focuses on flight combat, many other aspects of gaming come into play. The storyline provides a role-playing adventure: You begin as a squire in the Order of the Crown, and as you complete missions successfully (there are two dozen in the game) you gain rank — nine in the Order of the Crown, ten in the Order of the Sword, and 12 in the Order of the Rose.

At various stages, you can switch orders, although you needn't do so to complete the game. Changing orders lets you ride more powerful dragons and fly a greater number of missions. The more prestigious your order, the more difficult your tasks.

Other nice touches include magical objects you obtain after completing missions. You begin the game with a magical crystal ball (radar), an arrow of detection that points in the direction of the nearest target, and two healing ointments you or your dragon can use. You can acquire cloaks of protection, magical swords, and so on, as you progress through the ranks.

DragonStrike features numerous options: You can toggle between graphics and numeric displays of dragon and knight hitpoints, see a close-up view of your world, and determine whether your enemies will be pictured as bitmapped, detailed drawings or polygon shapes. You can save the game at the conclusion of a mission, but not during one — an option that would've been handy.

The game's graphics images run the gamut. Full-screen, hi-res VGA introduces each mission and ends each successful one. These screens look like reproductions from a fantasy art calendar. They include all the details — even projectiles such as fireballs, cones of ice, arrows, and tail spikes. Of course, the real treat is the bit-mapped dragons, draconians, wyverns, and manticores. To appreciate all DragonStrike has to offer, you've got to play it. With this offering, S.S.I. has taken computer gaming to a higher level.

Strategic Simulations, 675 Almanor Avenue, Suite 201, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, (800) 245-4525; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/EGA/VGA/Tandy 16-color; mouse, joystick, or keyboard; supports Ad Lib sound board; 6 MHz or faster recommended; off-disk copy protection; \$49.95

THE GAME OF HARMONY

By Carol S. Holzberg, Ph.D.

Hard day at the office? No problem! Just pop Accolade's Game of Harmony into the computer and relax. It's designed to entertain as it gently soothes the frazzled mind.

Harmony heralds the dawn of a new age of software entertainment. You won't find any arcade-like shoot-'em-ups, or rampant death and destruction. Instead you'll discover a bunch of colored orbs, called energy spheres, floating around the screen, colliding, realigning, and shifting position as they make impact with a colored sphere known as the Seeker. (IBM PC users can run Harmony with a MIDI interface and program their own instruments into the sound track.)

The object of the game is simple

enough. In electronic bumper-car fashion, players must use the Seeker orb to bring together pulsating spheres of the same color before they explode with tension. Spheres drain valuable energy when they burst, so keep an eye on the bar at the top of the screen. When your energy level falls to zero, you lose a life. You begin each game with only four lives, and the game ends when you've lost them.

When you unite like-colored spheres you create synergy (positive energy) and score points. As you reach higher levels of play, colliding the spheres becomes more difficult and you earn more points. Players "harmonize" the screen (solve the puzzle) if they bring together all orbs of the same color successfully. Creating harmony wins bonus points and moves you to another of the program's 50 configurations.

The greater your composure, the easier it is to obtain high scores. The hardest part of the game is becoming relaxed enough to manipulate keyboard controls or to get the joystick to operate exactly as you want. Be patient and take some time getting acquainted with the controls; otherwise, you'll end up sandwiching the orbs too near the wall to do any good.

If energy spheres of different colors collide, they generate a colored pod (a smaller orb). A pod grows into a new energy sphere unless it's run over by the Seeker orb before the three-second grace period elapses. "Gobble" up the pods for extra energy. If you harmonize all spheres without generating any pods, you'll score more bonus points. Get to the fourth level (and every fourth level thereafter) and play for bonus points. At bonus levels you can earn extra points while safeguarding the points and energy you have already. Each chunk of 20,000 points gives you an additional life.

Before playing for the first time, be sure to access the configuration screen to select game-play mode (demo, mantra, or normal), number of players (one or two), input device (keyboard or joystick), movement control (normal or alternative, each slightly different to suit individual taste), rotation speed (slow offers more precise ◀



Four Billion Years Of Evolution Is About To Go Down The Pooper.

Fight or be flushed! Those are your only options as you team with a fellow commando and battle the galaxy's greatest foe — Red Falcon.

Never, not even in the original arcade version, has computer warfare been this devastating. At every level Red's assault will intensify as he punishes earth with tanks, electro zappers and an army of alien annihilators. These ruthless characters are so tough, they often engulf half the battlefield!

To blast through Red's full course menu of mayhem, featuring Fort Fire Storm and the Tropics of Torture, you'll need marksmanship prowess with a Machine Gun, Spread Gun, Rocket Launcher and Laser. You'll also need multiple commando skills to overcome both side and overhead war perspectives. Ultimately though to save every man, woman, child and amoeba, you must clog up Red's attack and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Super C is programmed with realistic bit-map explosions and aliens that replicate the size of those in the original arcade version. It also supports Ad Lib™ and Tandy® Sound Boards.

Super C is a one or two player game available for: Amiga, IBM®/100% compatibles, Tandy® 1000.



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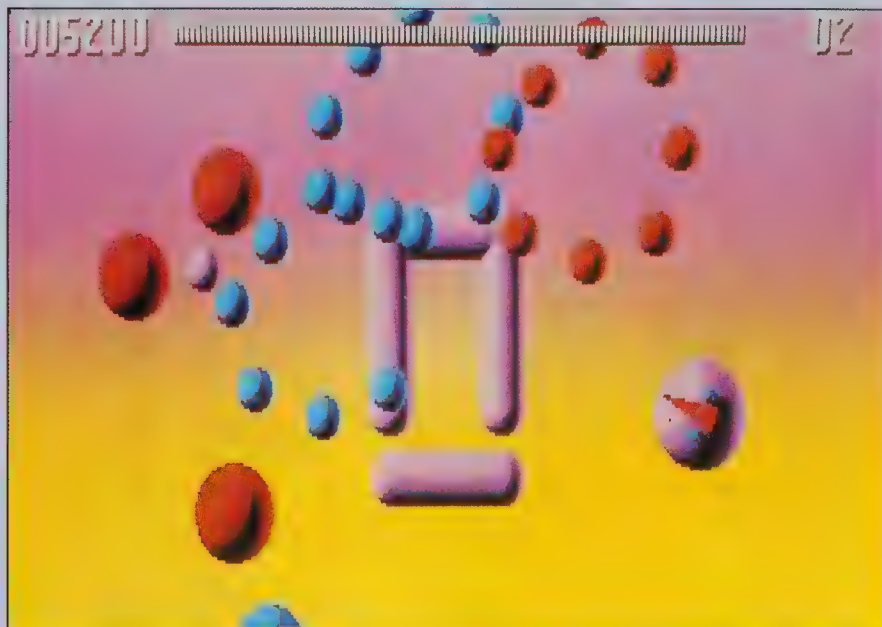
control than fast), and video mode. Choose the wrong video controller and the game won't run.

Harmony has some neat features, especially for players not in a tranquil state of mind. To start with, beginners can choose demo mode, complete with game sounds. Watching the

option. Each person has a Seeker and they work together to harmonize a two-player puzzle.

Although I enjoyed Harmony, it wasn't as soothing as its developers would have you believe. Sound effects are annoying beeps and buzzes that repeat constantly. Fortunately, you can

That drawback notwithstanding, Harmony is challenging and lots of fun. If you learn to manipulate the input controls and stay cool, you'll enjoy several hours of synergistic fun. With Harmony on screen, peace of mind is only a collision away.



In The Game of Harmony you must bring together like-colored spheres before they explode.

demo a few times helps you become more familiar with game rules.

Select mantra if you hate playing against a timer. Orbs don't pulsate, so they never explode with tension — take all the time you need to plan your collisions with the Seeker. You won't get any points for colliding spheres of the same color, but you'll still have access to all 50 puzzles on disk.

Gonzo competitors (you know the type — high achievers, workaholics, obsessive-compulsives) should elect normal mode, so that they can experience the thrill of competing against a timer. This mode requires you to synergize same-color orbs quickly (10 to 30 seconds after they appear), or they'll burst, wasting valuable energy. If all spheres explode, the round is over and you must begin again.

Whatever mode you select, the game includes a pause feature to let you take a breather. The save option lets you stop a game in progress, then return to it later. Both mantra and normal modes feature a two-player

toggle sound on or off depending on your mood.

Players should be aware of another anxiety-producing feature. The program incorporates a mild form of off-disk copy protection. Players must answer a question correctly before the program will run. When a game picture appears on screen with orbs of various colors and sizes, you must examine the screen closely and pinpoint the exact location of the Seeker orb. At this point you must refer to a code sheet containing 24 uniquely numbered screens, find the illustration that matches the on-screen game picture, and enter the appropriate number. Harmony gives you three chances to type in the correct code. After the third incorrect answer, you must restart the program.

Although this procedure sounds simple, it isn't. The 24 sample screens and their individual code numbers are printed in faint purple on dark burgundy paper. Screen dumps are reduced in size and hard to see.

Accolade, 550 South Winchester Boulevard, San Jose, CA 95128, (800) 245-7744; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/MCGA/EGA/VGA/Tandy 16-color; keyboard, joystick recommended; 8 MHz recommended; DOS 2.1 or greater; supports MIDI, Roland, CMS, and Ad Lib sound boards; off-disk copy protection; \$44.95

TUNNELS OF ARMAGEDDON

By James V. Trunzo

Tunnels of Armageddon, from California Dreams, has become something of a cult favorite on the Apple IIGS, for which it was first released. Having now made the transition to MS-DOS, look for this addictive arcade game to capture PC audiences as well.

To test the physical, technical, and intellectual abilities of the human race, aliens have created a maze of sophisticated tunnels guarded by moving barriers, mechanical defenders, and twisting walls. If the human pilot can negotiate the tunnels in the allotted time and disable the explosive device at the end of the maze, the aliens promise the secret of traversing the galaxy. If the pilot fails, the doomsday device will explode, destroying the entire planet.

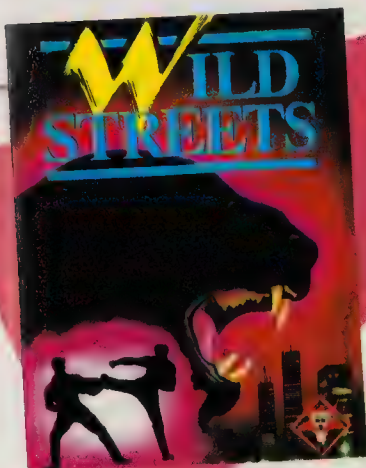
The Challenge

The storyline is a simple framework for a tension-filled, pulse-pounding

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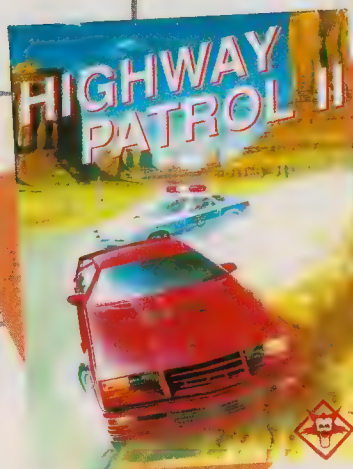
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THE ACTION CONCEPT

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arcade game that demonstrates an expert programmer's ability to make a basic concept engrossing. Armageddon is a series of rapidly changing, shifting, swerving rectangles that form tunnels through which you must guide your Hermes spacecraft. Your view is through the cockpit of the vessel; a

tunnels. Each of the three types can damage your vessel differently, reducing energy, causing structural problems, or both.

You're not defenseless, though: Your Hermes craft is highly maneuverable and armed. Those thoughtful aliens placed energy pods, force shields,



Fly through Tunnels of Armageddon in the allotted time and you'll save the planet.

highly detailed, yet easily readable, control panel and gauges dominate the four sides of the screen.

Each set of tunnels is color-coded: Gray tunnels are easy, but long; green ones are moderate in both length and difficulty; red ones are short, but difficult. And when you reach a blue tunnel you can breathe a sigh of relief; it signals the end of one of the game's 20 stages. At the end of every fourth stage (completion of one of five zones), you can save the game.

Just in case it sounds too easy, the company has included an alarm that sounds as soon as you enter the tunnels. It travels through the tunnels rapidly and can detonate the explosive device if you don't reach it first. You can slow the alarm by shooting the generator icons that appear at random throughout the tunnels. The more generators you take out, the more time to complete your run.

Mechanical guardians are also menacing as you travel at an incredible simulated speed through the

invisibility devices, plasma bombs, and other forms of weaponry within the walls of the tunnels. Just shoot them while traveling at blinding speed to add them to your inventory.

Without a doubt these nuances add to the enjoyment of the game, but the real challenge is reacting to the shifting shape of the tunnel. Bumping the walls wears away the ship's structure, so you must hone your flying skills.

Words won't do justice to the makeup of the tunnels: They aren't just solid colors outlined with a floor and ceiling. Using a process called *cycling*, the colors run through dozens of "shades" to create a beautiful visual effect and the illusion of high-speed movement.

Give It a New Twist

California Dreams has added to the play value of Armageddon by letting you go back after learning a pattern and completing the game successfully, and randomize the sequence of the

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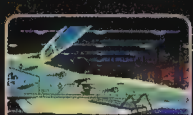
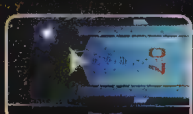
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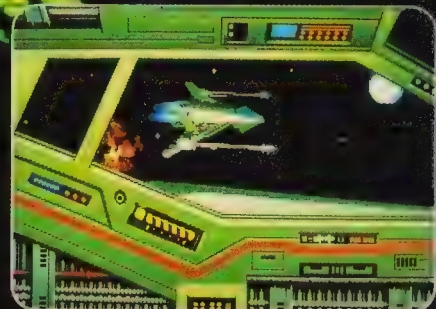
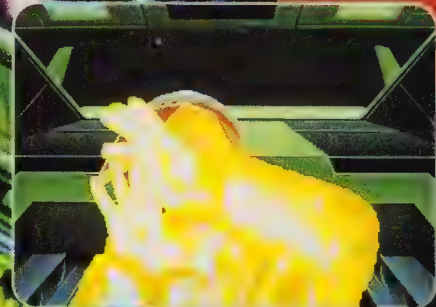


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tunnels to create a new challenge.

Tunnels of Armageddon is ideally suited for a 10- to 12-megahertz machine, but it more than holds up on slower machines. For an exhilarating experience that will keep you in front of your computer longer than you intended, strap yourself into the cockpit of a Hermes and enter . . . the Tunnels of Armageddon.

California Dreams; 130A Knowles Drive, Los Gatos, CA 95030, (408) 378-0340; 512K (640K for VGA/MCGA/Tandy) IBM PC and compatibles; CGA/EGA/MCGA/ VGA/ Tandy/Hercules; keyboard or mouse; supports Ad Lib sound card; off-disk copy protection; \$39.95

NUCLEAR WAR

By John S. Manor

International relations are deteriorating; the Third World and the West are at each other's throats. There's only one way to settle it — nuke it out. In Nuclear War, from New World Computing, that's just what you get to do. You're the leader of one of five nations in the nuclear club, and your goal is to be the only survivor when the missiles start flying.

At the start of Nuclear War you must select the four leaders who'll be your opponents. The ten leaders you choose from are based, tongue in cheek, on past and present leaders. When you pick from the ranks of Ayatollah Kookamamie, Colonel Malomar Khadaffy, Tricky Dick, Mao the Pun, Ghanji, Mikhail Gorbachev, Prime Minister Satcher, Ronnie Raygun, Infidel Castro, and Jimi Farmer, a happy face appears next to your new leader. Click on the Nuclear War logo or hit Return to begin play.

The "diplomacy terminal" shows the four leaders and icons for missiles, warheads, bombers, defense systems,

and propaganda. On the central viewer you can see your nation, and selecting another leader displays his nation.

Each nation has five cities, and in any turn you can target a city for a nuclear strike, hit it with a propaganda blitz, build weapons, or activate a defense system. The actions you take affect your rapport with each leader. If 99 pops up beside a leader, he likes you. A low number may mean a nuclear attack is imminent. When you select a leader, you can see what the others think of him as well.

Nuclear War is a game of diplomacy and strategy. You set your attitude toward a leader by changing the happy face displayed next to him. There are five faces reflecting five attitudes — benevolent, friendly, neutral, unfriendly, and hostile. Each happy face has a different effect on different leaders.

By studying their reactions, you may learn how to manipulate opponents and gain an advantage. Prime Minister Satcher, for example, loves an aggressor. If you put on a mean face and attack her enemies, she'll love you. Each leader has a comment after each turn and sometimes there'll be a hint or a comment to help you play the game more efficiently.

The program plays out all actions with animated graphics on the global monitor screen, a picture of the world in orbit showing the nations and their cities. One by one each nation takes action, such as launching a missile, or conducting propaganda. When Khadaffy attacks, a missile appears on a launching pad in his nation. When Tricky Dick builds weapons, a factory with smoking chimneys appears. When a missile or bomber hits a target, a mushroom cloud sprouts over the city. If a leader destroys a city, all that's left is a crater.

Keeping your cities populated heavily is an important strategy: The larger your cities, the more attacks they can withstand. Try using propaganda to make the population from another country's city move to yours. Using too much, however, can backfire, causing your own people to leave.

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reduces its population — the bigger the warhead, the more damage done. Sometimes, missiles miss targets, warheads turn out to be duds, and bombers crash, randomly saving a city from attack. If your city has bomb shelters, you'll run less risk of damage.

When you see opponents readying

may be a missile or a bomber. On the next turn you target another leader's city on the central viewer, then select the warhead you want to drop.

If your victim doesn't use a defense system and all goes well, you'll see a missile arc into space, then drop to the city, enveloping it in a mushroom

Nuclear War is an addictive arcade-strategy game that's deceptively simple to play and yet satisfying. The ten personalities of the leaders lend variety to the game. And, the graphics make the screens entertaining. Nuclear War is challenging — I only won one out of every three or four games.

Ronnie Raygun and Tricky Dick are particularly tough opponents. (Maybe it's because they're Republicans). Although it's a bit overpriced, Nuclear War is solid nuclear-age entertainment.

New World Computing (distributed by Electronic Arts), 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404, (800) 245-4525; 512K IBM PC Tandy and compatibles; CGA/EGA/MCGA (640K)/VGA (640K); keyboard, mouse recommended; DOS version 2.1 or higher; no copy protection; \$49.95



Nuclear War's characters are tongue-in-cheek representations of past and present leaders.

missiles and bombers for launch, you may want to activate either the Laser Net Defense System (L.N.D.S.) or the MegaCannon system. The L.N.D.S. will shoot down any incoming missiles on the next turn, but is useless against bombers. The MegaCannon will shoot down both bombers and missiles. Use your defense systems sparingly, because they aren't unlimited.

To view your arsenal, check out the diplomacy terminal. When you begin play you have a limited number of 10-megaton missiles and warheads, as well as 10-, 20-, 50-, and 100-megaton missiles and warheads. You can build more missiles, warheads, bombers, and defense systems by choosing the "build" action on a given turn. The more cities you have, the more weapons you can build. Your production will slow when you lose cities.

On Target

To launch a nuclear attack, choose a "carrier" for the warhead, which

cloud. If you really want to "do in" a rival leader, however, bombers are the weapon of choice. Once you ready a bomber, it can launch several warheads, one per turn, until running out of bombs.

When a nation's cities are wiped out, it'll lash out in a final strike, using all remaining weapons. The most hated nations seem to get the brunt of the attack. If your own cities are wiped out, the game goes into fast-play mode until it decides on an ultimate winner. If no one wins, you'll see the world exploding. The program then displays high scores. Your score depends on the number of remaining cities and the total population.

There's an element of randomness in Nuclear War that I sometimes dislike and sometimes praise, depending on whose city is affected. Random disasters such as massive earthquakes sometimes decide the fate of the game. Seeing your biggest city blast itself into orbit to join the L-5 space colony is the ultimate irony.

QIX

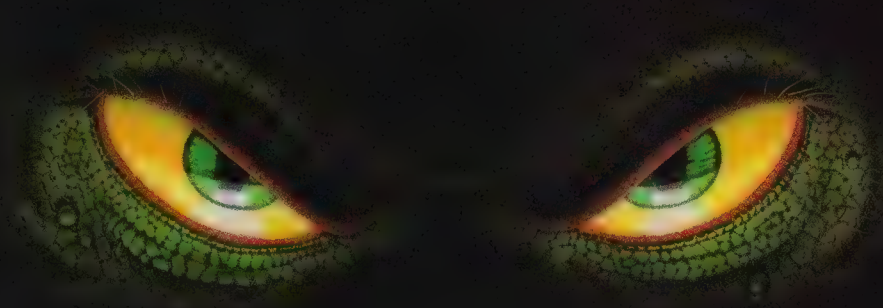
By Carol S. Holzberg, Ph.D.

Computer viruses are no laughing matter, but Taito pokes good-natured fun at virus infection with its fast-action computer virus game Qix. When the virulent Qix virus (pronounced "kicks") invades your computer, you must cordon off sections of computer memory before it spreads throughout your entire system, spawning the equally toxic Sparx and Spritz subviruses. (Aren't you relieved this menace is just a fun-filled simulation?)

Scoring points depends upon the amount of memory (the percent of screen space) you manage to rope off. You can advance to the next level only by successfully immunizing, or sectioning off, the specified amount of memory.

You also score points based on the speed at which you successfully safeguard areas of memory. When your

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marker fills a screen area using a "slow" draw, you earn twice as many points as you would with a "fast" one. Be careful: Slow draws leave your marker exposed to virus infection for longer periods of time.

You begin the game with only four lives, and the game is over when you lose them. Every time Qix comes into contact with an unfinished marker line, or when Sparx, Spritz, or Fuse infections collide with your marker, you lose a life.

The longer you manage to survive,

Capture more space than the stated level objective and win a bonus. Each percent over the threshold goal increases your score by 1000 points. Trap a Spritz within a filled section and you also score extra points. Until you lose a life, you'll earn slow-fill points for all sections you fill with a fast draw.

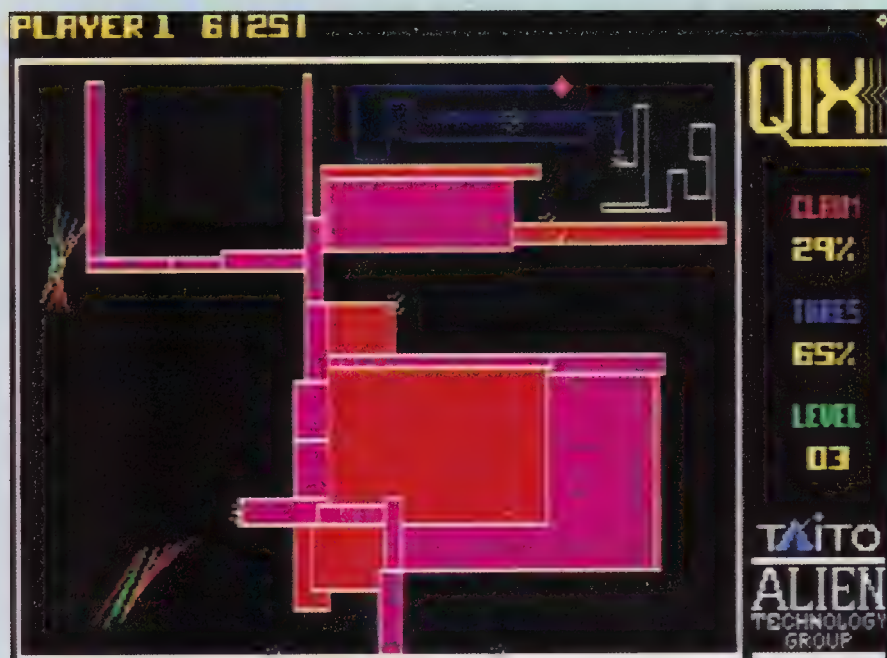
Separate two Qix by ambushing one within a fill and you'll increase the point values you earned for both slow and fast draws. For every 50,000 points, you win an extra life. At the

joystick isn't available, the four directional arrow keys function as the keyboard's default controller keys. You can configure the program to operate with custom keyboard controller keys.

As with the majority of game software, Qix is copy protected. Users can make a program backup, but the game requires a key disk to run. Key-disk copy protection is an unwelcome feature because it slows down game play initially. The game's price, however, is a decided plus. Taito also includes both 3.5-inch and 5.25-inch disks in the package, so that players with both floppy drives on their systems can obtain a free backup copy.

Qix is a fun-filled, fast-action gaming sensation. The arcade-like hazards, quick-paced animation, and thrilling sound effects make for exciting video entertainment whether you're playing alone or against a friend. If the Qix virus takes over, you can kiss your bits and bytes goodbye.

Taito Software, 267 West Esplanade, North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V7M 1A5, (604) 984-3344; 512K IBM PC and compatibles; CGA/EGA/VGA/Hercules; DOS 2.1 or higher; mouse, keyboard, joystick; supports Ad Lib and CMS sound boards; copy protection; \$14.95



Beat the Qix virus by cordoning off sections of your computer.

the more virulent Qix becomes. Whenever the thin red line at the top of the screen disappears, two Sparx begin to zip along completed border lines, always moving in the direction of your marker. Avoid contact with any Sparx if you want to stay alive.

Rack 'Em Up

Fuses travel along incomplete border lines, and similarly to other Qix viruses, cause your marker to explode on contact. Qix generates a Spritz virus at preset intervals. The longer it takes you to complete a level, the more Spritz organisms you'll have to evade. The higher the level, the faster they appear. A Spritz will attack your marker wherever it's positioned.

end of the game, high scores make it to the Qix Kickers hall of fame, but you need at least 100,001 points to top the list.

First-time players must configure the program to run on their hardware system. You must choose an appropriate video adapter, music driver, and input device. Menu-driven prompts simplify hardware setup. The software makes selections for you frequently, and you need to confirm the settings it chooses. All configuration settings are saved to disk; the next time you boot, the setup loads automatically into memory and you proceed directly to game play.

Gamers can try to beat the Qix virus using keyboard controls, but I found a joystick provides best results. If a

SEARCH FOR THE KING

By James V. Trunzo

When you hear the title of Accolade's latest game, you'll probably assume it's a fantasy game. Well, you're right — sort of.

In Search for the King, though, there are no dragons, elves, and wizards; instead you're looking for "the king of rock and roll," Elvis Presley. As the hero of the game ☛

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you're neither a fierce warrior nor a powerful spell caster; instead, you're none other than — move over Leisure Suit Larry — Les Manley.

Although Sierra On-Line's famous nerd and Accolade's Les Manley are both well-intentioned incompetents searching for love, prestige, and the good life, Accolade's game is by no means a carbon copy. Search for the King has a completely different flavor: While it contains some adult overtones, mature material is subtle and there isn't as much emphasis on sex.

You Ain't Nothin' But . . .

Les Manley holds the prestigious position of manual tape rewinder in the sound department of TV station WILL. The promotions department has concocted a surefire scheme to help ratings: They're launching a "Search for Elvis" contest — the prize, a cool \$1 million for anyone who can prove the King's whereabouts.

You, as Les Manley, set out in search of the King. Finding Elvis and claiming the prize money will not only get you out of your career quagmire, but may win you the affection of the luscious Stella Hart, your secret love.

Your search takes you from a circus to Las Vegas, to the Kingdom itself, tracking the greatest entertainer of all time. This adventure sure beats rewinding tape!

Search for the King is an enjoyable play. The designers paid close attention to detail to create esthetically pleasing scenes, screen after screen. The animated sequences run smoothly and realistically.

Although the music playing throughout the program is of high quality, it's often obtrusive. With a single keystroke, however, you can toggle sound on and off. Most of the time you'll want to leave the music on.

Not finding any of Elvis' hits as background music was somewhat disappointing, though. You won't even hear any selections from the King's repertoire in the Kingdom.

Although you'll enjoy game play, you may find it annoying. The mouse interface is superficial at best, as you

use it almost exclusively to move or to access the options menu. (Using the keyboard is much easier.) Because you can't even look at or acquire objects with the mouse, you must either type

gives you a fair chance, but like all games of its ilk, it can be unforgiving. If you haven't made judicious use of the save-game option, arriving in either Las Vegas or the Kingdom can



In Search for the King you travel the country and track the greatest entertainer of all time.

the commands or use single-letter shortcuts. Still, hunt-and-peck typists may be frustrated.

Love Me Tender

The puzzles that make up the heart of the game range from average to extremely difficult. Most of them are enjoyably challenging: With a little thought and some practice you can solve them.

Although in the majority of the puzzles the game provides either visual or verbal clues to your actions, there are two cases that fail to give you some direction.

The following three hints may make the game more fun:

- Everyone needs a "dream." To get one, find someone who's asleep and dreaming.
- At the circus, the man playing the Test-o-Strength isn't for show.
- After you're finished in Las Vegas, find a way to Nashville — you can't do that inside the casino.

In most cases, Search for the King

be disastrous. If you don't have certain items, you'll have to restart the game completely, because you can't back-track to any of the three major locations. Remember: Save as often as you want, but you must save your game before leaving for Las Vegas and the Kingdom.

Search for the King takes a tongue-in-check look at the Elvis phenomenon while providing gamers with a more down-to-earth hero — a kind of Everyman with whom we can all identify. The game makes intelligent use of puns and excellent use of graphics to create a top-of-the-line adventure. Viva Les Manley!

Accolade, 550 South Winchester Boulevard, San Jose, CA 95128, (408) 985-1700; 640K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/MCGA/EGA/VGA/Tandy 16-color; keyboard, mouse optional; supports Ad Lib, CMS, Roland MT-32 and LAPC-1, Casio CT460 and other MIDI sound boards; off-disk copy protection; \$59.95 ◇

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TREASURE TRAP

By James V. Trunzo

On January 9, 1856, the cargo ship *Esmeralda* sank to the ocean floor, taking with her the gold bullion she was carrying. Now 71 years later, famed treasure diver Howard Kelp has located the wreckage 300 feet beneath the ocean's surface. Despite the dangers, Kelp has decided to risk everything for the estimated \$50 million worth of gold scattered throughout the rooms, cabins, and holds of the *Esmeralda*.

Man Overboard

Treasure Trap, a free-wheeling, puzzle-ridden arcade game from Electronic Arts, begins with a cute animated scene, showing the adventurous Kelp being lowered from the deck of his ship, the S.S. *Poon*, into the sea. When you next see him, your task will begin.

Using keyboard, mouse, or joystick, you must maneuver Kelp through the *Esmeralda*'s 100 multi-level rooms, trying to locate and recover the gold bars.

Of course, this task isn't as easy as it sounds. Poisonous jellyfish, grasping crabs, and electric eels also occupy the holds of the ship; contact with any of the dangerous denizens of the deep means instant death. Compounding the difficulty of your undertaking is the fact that not all doors are open — you'll have to find the keys.

Something's Fishy

Furthermore, although you can see most of the gold bars you can't always access them readily. You'll have to jump on barrels, push around crates and solve puzzles to reach the gold bars. In fact, occasionally you'll have to trick the fish you're trying to avoid into pushing hard-to-reach gold out to you. As if the fish and the puzzles don't make your job difficult enough,

you have a limited supply of oxygen.

Although your mission is formidable, you have a number of aids to help you succeed in your salvage effort. In addition to five lives per game, you can use the extra air tanks scattered throughout the sunken ship. (Even so, don't blithely ignore your supply.) And you can capture friendly fish that'll eat all the dangerous fish in a room. Use these fish judi-

tures, chairs, floating crates, and, of course, your diver, move simultaneously and interact with each other, making the game visually excellent.

Also, the game's puzzles are more sophisticated than most video-game products. With computer's additional memory and its ability to render simulated 3D graphics, Treasure Trap's puzzles include more variety and subtlety. Any number of logistical



On your quest to find gold Treasure Trap takes you beneath the ocean's surface.

ciously because finding them isn't easy, and once you capture a friendly fish you can use it only once.

Into the Depths

If all of this sounds like a Nintendo game that's because it belongs loosely in the same category as the Mario Brothers, Bubble Bobble, and Donkey Kong titles. Although Treasure Trap's play is similar to game play in these other titles, its presentation far surpasses the standard video game's. Not only is there more depth and more challenging exploration in Treasure Trap, the graphics clearly exceed your typical noncomputer game.

In VGA mode, Treasure Trap boasts impressive three-dimensional graphics and animation. In some screens, hundreds of different elements comprise a single room. Dozens of these objects, such as air bubbles, crea-

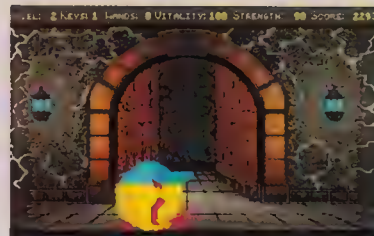
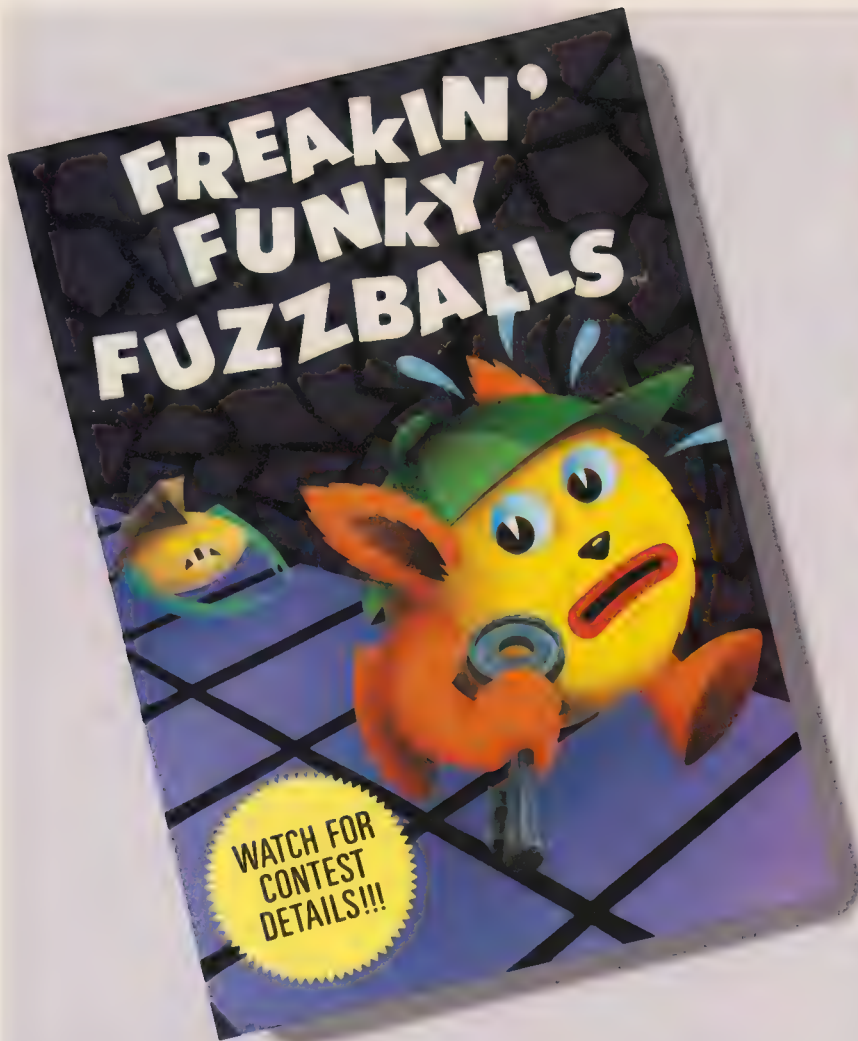
puzzles will provide gamers with real challenges as they attempt to win.

Extras

The mechanics of the game are simple, consisting mainly of moving and jumping. Choosing from the three methods of play (mouse, joystick, or keyboard) is more a matter of individual taste than mechanical superiority because all are equally responsive.

Treasure Trap also contains the required frills, including a mapping feature, a save/restore game utility and both high-score and fastest-time tables. Use the mapping function to keep track of your progress.

Each room in which you've been is revealed and numbered. Clever gamers will make note of which rooms contain unused air tanks and abandoned keys (you can carry only



"Zapper's more persistent than a portable vacuum."

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"My employees aren't getting any work done. I just know there's a boss key."

Rob Sirotek, Vice President, Sir-tech

"Honey? Are you ever coming to bed?"

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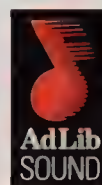
You'll run around collecting your goodies as the floor beneath changes color and weakens. Eventually, it will disappear! You may trap yourself, but with smarts, you'll trap your enemy instead! But that's only for the first few levels. Beyond that, the strategy is up to you. With the right tricks and a bit of *Fuzz Power*, you will be good enough to reach level 15 where you can blow the socks off your enemy!

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three at a time), so that they can retrieve these items quickly when the need arises.

Treasure Trap is an enjoyable diversion for computer gamers who are tired of spending 100 hours tramping about dank dungeons. Younger children and teens will enjoy the game because it includes arcade-like action and it pushes the computer's capabilities to the limit. And Treasure Trap is about \$10 less than most Nintendo, Sega, or Atari cartridges!

Electronic Zoo, 3431-A Benson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21227, (301) 646-5031; 640K IBM PC and compatibles; CGA/TGA/EGA/VGA; keyboard, joystick; supports Ad Lib sound boards; off-disk copy protection; \$39.95

RAILROAD TYCOON

by John S. Manor

In the early days of railroading, wooden boxcars and people made of iron carried cargo and passengers to their destinations. Back then a few rich and powerful tycoons owned and controlled those railroads, but now, thanks to Microprose's Railroad Tycoon, you can try your hand at creating, operating, and expanding your own railroad.

With the cash you've raised selling stocks and bonds, you begin building your fledgling railroad line, and over the years you guide it as it develops and spreads across the land. Three other would-be tycoons soon appear and start their own railroads. In an atmosphere of cutthroat competition, you and your railroad must somehow survive, profit, and grow.

When you begin, you must choose the location and the era in which to build your railroad empire. Whether

it's Eastern USA (1830), Western USA (1866), England (1828), or Europe (1900), you must take economy, geography, and technology into consideration. (After all, you can't build diesel-electric engines in 1828.)

You must select either the *Investor*, *Financier*, *Mogul*, or *Tycoon* level of difficulty. This difficulty level determines the amount of money you get for delivering passengers and cargo, and how many years you can operate the railroad before retiring. Even your retirement pension depends on the game's difficulty level, as well as your success in running your railroad.

To start playing Railroad Tycoon you must lay track, build stations, create trains, and plan their schedules. Although you have one million dollars to start your railroad, you may sell more bonds during the game if you need more money. You have to husband your cash carefully, however, or you'll end up in the red.

The main screen includes four maps. The regional display shows the world in which you're playing and its railroad tracks. The area display gives you a closer schematic view of your railroad. The local display is an even closer view, showing the land's geography. The detail map shows tracks, moving trains, cities, industries, and geography in a close-up view.

All Aboard

Using the keyboard, you build your railroad on the detail display. The best place to lay your first stretch of track is between two heavily populated industrial cities, such as coal-mining or factory towns. Once you place the track, build one of three types of structures, including depots, stations, or terminals. Each type of station draws cargo and passengers from the surrounding area, so balance its cost against the industry and number of passengers within its range.

Through a series of menu selections you build your trains at the terminals by selecting an engine, then adding a number of cars. Whatever you choose, an animated sequence builds it before your eyes.



In *Railroad Tycoon* you can select the level of difficulty and build your own railroad.

You can add passenger cars or mail cars or make up a freight train that hauls anything from coal to food to manufactured goods. (Try running short, fast passenger trains and long, slower freight trains.) There's no limit to the number of trains you can run at one time, other than the amount of track. I've had as many as a dozen trains operating at once.

Now your trains need schedules, so that the conductors know where to stop and what cars to pick up or leave. With the *Train Report* you can assign four main stops. Depending on the number of your trains in between stops, you designate the locomotive as local, through, express, or limited. Feel free to change the number and types of cars at the four main stops.

To add to the excitement, try playing the game in a different mode. In *Dispatcher Operation*, players use block signals to run trains. (A *block* is a length of track with a set of signals at each end. Usually one train runs in a block at a time. As a train gets a green signal to enter a block, the signal at the other end turns red to keep the trains out.) When you set up your railroad you have to break the tracks into blocks, or you won't be able to run more than one train at a time. If you override the block signals, your trains may collide. The *No Collision* option

makes play easier for first-timers, because when two trains meet on a track, one train pulls over into a siding until the other passes.

If you enjoy a challenge, choose the

Cutthroat Competition mode and try avoiding a takeover by another railroad. If you're the easygoing type, choose *Friendly Competition* and concentrate on building a profitable railroad.

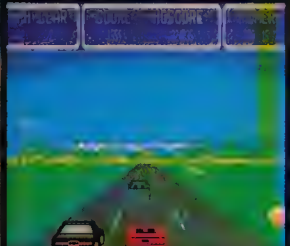
Basic Economy mode is easier to play because each city demands all commodities such as coal, steel, food and so on. If you choose *Complex Economy* mode, you have to consider a city's demand for commodities when you route your trains for maximum profit.

The industrial strategy in *Railroad Tycoon* is as complex and entertaining as the running of the trains. You can lay track to block other railroads from a profitable area, or you can build track into stations belonging to another railroad and begin a price war.

Sometimes a rival tycoon will try to buy up a majority of your stock and take over your company, but you can try to avoid this by declaring bankruptcy or buying your own stock. Taking over a competitor's railroad can help your own railroad tremendously; sometimes you should show

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no mercy. You can siphon money from the company's treasury or try to build into a certain city, possibly blocking another competitor or starting a price war. You can make improvements on your railroad as you play: Put in double tracks and alleviate congested train traffic. Wooden bridges are prone to washouts, so you may want to replace them with stone or steel bridges. You can even upgrade small depots to stations or terminals and attract more business.

As you play Railroad Tycoon, read the on-screen financial reports to help you in your strategy. See if your trains are making a profit and junk the unprofitable ones.

Station reports tell you how many carloads of passengers or freight are waiting for pickup. The stock-report graph shows the relative values of all railroad stocks. Train reports even include the speed, location, and destination of your trains. While you're at it, read the manual — it's clearly written and includes some historical back-

ground on locomotives, tycoons, and railroading in general.

Become a Tycoon

I found Railroad Tycoon to be addictive fun. There's glory in seeing your tiny local railroad grow to the size of several large Midwestern states. Knocking rival tycoons out of the competition is exciting, too. The graphics and sound have the feel of a grand-scale sophisticated toy train set. The opening animation sequence is especially entertaining, as it displays a variety of railroad history's locomotives to the tune of some upbeat music.

With Railroad Tycoon I was thoroughly absorbed for hours. Its depiction of train operations is detailed and true to life, and its economic and industrial strategy games are engrossing.

Best of all, Railroad Tycoon informs as it entertains. The game requires an intimate understanding of the law of supply and demand as it

affected railroads. As you play, you'll learn quite a bit about railroad history.

Microprose Software, Inc., 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030, (800) 876-1151; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/VGA/EGA; joystick, keyboard, mouse recommended; supports Ad Lib sound board; off-disk copy protection; \$59.95

KING'S BOUNTY

By James V. Trunzo

New World Computing, the company that set standards with its previous fantasy role-playing game entitled Might and Magic, have done it again. King's Bounty is another high-quality



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fantasy game — but it isn't more of the same old thing.

The theme of King's Bounty strikes some familiar chords, but provides new and interesting variations on a popular theme. As the game's hero, you return from cleaning out the monster-infested dungeons beneath the kingdom, to find that someone has stolen the Sceptre of Order, magical symbol of power and icon of hope, and hidden it somewhere on one of four continents.

You also discover that 17 powerful figures, including robber barons, elven sorcerers, powerful undead liches, and demon lords, have overthrown King Maximus. Each of these enemies has his powerful army garrisoned inside a castle.

Your job is to raise your own army, travel the four continents, find powerful magical artifacts to aid your task, hire allies to bolster your army, and overthrow the villains.

Each time you gain one of eight magical artifacts and defeat one of the

17 conspirators, you earn a piece of the map locating the stolen sceptre. All of the conspirators have bounties on their heads, so if you find them you can have the gold you need to pay your troops, buy magic spells, and hire replacements for your army.

Join Forces

This game is really fun, which perhaps is the best compliment a reviewer can give. A large part of the enjoyment comes from the game's simple mechanics. If you're tired of spending an hour just creating a party of adventurers, King's Bounty will please you from the get-go.

You begin the game by choosing a single hero from a group of four; you can select a knight, a paladin, a sorceress, or a barbarian. As this character you must recruit an army to lead into combat.

Each of these four characters has certain strengths and weaknesses that affect your ability to fight, recruit, and

cast spells. In all phases of the game you must plan your strategy and tactics — even your choice of a leader affects the way the game evolves. Not only do these personalities make the game interesting and challenging, but they also add dimension, making it several games in one.

The armies you conscript vary greatly from beginning to end of the game. Make up your force with any of 25 unit types, including militia, archers, nomads, trolls, dwarfs, druids, giants, and elves. You can even have an army of undeads, adding skeletons, zombies, ghosts, vampires, and demons to your horde.

Putting together your army is no easy task. First of all, each troop type has its own recruitment cost. Militia might cost only 50 gold pieces a week to maintain, while a dragon costs an exorbitant 5000 gold pieces. There's only one rule of thumb: The more powerful the troop the more it costs.

You must even consider the troops' egos when you put together your ➤

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army. The more powerful the group (either because of skill or sheer numbers) the more difficult they are to control. Your leadership rating must be at least as high as the overall troop rating or your army may go out of control and attack your allies.

Although the King gives you a monthly allotment to pay your troops, you must budget the money carefully or you'll fall short. If your total costs exceed your income, troops will desert.

At any given time a group's morale rating determines the overall makeup of your army. No member of the humanoid race, including elves, humans, dwarves, and serfs willingly with any of the undead types.

Adding a corp of zombies to an army of pikemen, gnomes, and barbarians lowers their morale considerably and makes defeating the humanoids easier. Think carefully when you put together your army.

Although you must consider all these subtle details when choosing your army, the game's mechanics are effectively simple. Combat takes place on a single screen, with individually animated icons representing each type of troop.

Using directional keys, you make your troops move and attack. By selecting the shoot option (the *S* key) and placing the cursor over the target, you fire your army's missiles. By selecting the use command (the *U* key), picking the spell, and placing the cursor on the target, you implement magic spells.

Tough Battles

Even though you can master the game's mechanics quickly, the combat sequences are still challenging. Various types of troops are more effective against some enemies than they are against others; therefore, you must know which unit to use in an attack.

Certain troops have special abilities that require well-planned tactics. For example, ghosts are easy targets to kill, but they're highly dangerous: When they kill an enemy, that foe becomes part of their ghost force.

Remember: Replace your dead soldiers.

If you send 30 militia against five ghosts, in no time the rest of your troops will confront 35 ghosts. For example, the militia kills two ghosts, then the remaining three ghosts kill five militia, and the ghosts up their force to eight.

This process tends to repeat itself and soon gets out of hand. A successful general will use archers to attack ghosts at long range or perhaps use

spells that freeze powerful enemies for a round, or teleport a slow-moving but hard-hitting troop to a strategic position on the battlefield.

Some noncombat spells appear useless and expensive at first glance, but after you fail to find the sceptre once or twice, you begin to appreciate the importance of the Gate spells that take you swiftly from one town or castle to the other.

Time is more than a casual factor in



Your mission in King's Bounty is to return the Sceptre of Order and defeat the traitorous villains.

a freeze spell to stop the ghost's movement until there are only one or two left.

King's Bounty handles magic quite nicely. There are a dozen spell types, including combat and general spells. You can use only one spell per combat round, and once it's gone you must purchase the spell again.

While magic plays an important role, especially if your leader is a sorceress, none of the combat spells is so overpowering that it throws off the game's balance. In fact, magic doesn't become a big factor until the later stages of the game, when brute force can't overwhelm powerful enemies, such as dragons, demons, and archmagics.

The most effective spells aren't fireballs and lightning bolts; instead, use

game play. Even though your quest may be going well, you'll lose if you don't complete it in a given amount of time. The way you manipulate your time plays as big a role in winning the game as do your exploits on the battlefield.

The VGA graphics in King's Bounty are colorful, fascinating, and varied. Each troop type has its own animated icon. Giants pick up boulders and either hurl them or strike with them. Elven archers aim high in the air and release their deadly missiles. Vampires shoot a fire-like beam out of their eyes.

Full-featured head shots of the major villains add to the overall enjoyment of play. The realistically detailed lands and buildings round out an esthetically pleasing graphics package.

Just when you think no company



BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP, BUT SPACE GOES ON FOREVER.

This is the bumper sticker I slapped on my starship. But I'm the captain, so who says I can't make a statement to my fellow merchants? Besides, it's true. In the vastness of space, there's plenty of room for genuine ugliness. I run into *lots* of aliens — spineless blobs like the Spemin, bizarro mystic broccoli like the Tandelou — that make me shudder and reach for the nearest can of industrial-strength pesticide.

So why do I do it? So I can cop an intellectual toaster and slice and dice some phantom in the nebula? Do I give a flying fungus?

I guess I really do. The planet Arth needs fuel and technology to withstand a Spemin *blob-literation*. So rather than vegetate before the T.V., I talk to vegetables in space and trade with bug-eyed aliens

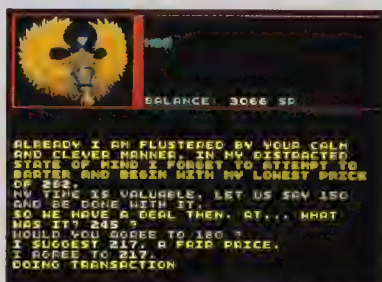
that resemble the hairy mold growing in the shower. And I remind myself: Life is no beauty pageant.



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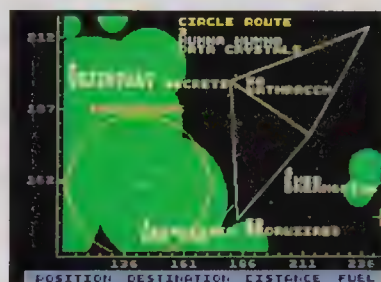
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can break new ground in the well-developed field of fantasy games, New World Computing comes up with a real winner.

King's Bounty, a must for true adventurers, whether veterans or novices, saves jaundiced fantasy gamers. With its graphic, strategic, and mechanical excellence, King's Bounty may well become a cult classic. Why not give it a try?

New World Computing (distributed by Electronic Arts), 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404, (800) 245-4525; 384K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/EGA/MCGA/VGA/Hercules/Tandy; keyboard; off-disk copy protection; \$49.95

POWER DRIFT

By Carol S. Holzberg, Ph.D.

Power Drift offers armchair racing enthusiasts a chance to get behind the wheel of a high-speed racecar and put the pedal to the metal. Drivers compete against the likes of Jason the Skinhead and Jeronimo the Mohican and make their precarious way around wild turns, passing other cars in a flurry of exhilarated acceleration. When you win at Power Drift, you know you've made it to the big leagues of racing.

Drivers begin by choosing one of five different courses, each with five tracks. You can peel rubber through a big city, rev your motor at the local drag strip, or pound the track at the beach, in the desert, or by the ocean.

After you've selected the course, you get to choose a driver, but that has no bearing on your driving skills. Whether you're cruising the speedways by night, or angling the treacherous asphalt by day, your objective remains the same: Make your competitors eat dust.

Racers must cross the finish line in third place or better to win a trophy and advance to the next track in the

course. If you complete all five tracks successfully, Power Drift rewards you with two even more treacherous challenges. You can play at three levels of difficulty — easy, medium, and hard. Even if you manage to complete the beginner courses successfully, it will be quite a while before you've mastered every challenge on disk.

Start Your Engines

Power Drift ships on four 5.25-inch disks. The first floppy contains the game itself, and the other three disks consist of data files and video drivers for CGA, EGA, and MCGA graphics cards. Because disks aren't copy-protected, making backups is easy. Installing the program on a hard disk

audio device, Power Drift disables the sound effects automatically. You decide whether to use a joystick or the numeric keypad to control your vehicle. Once you've completed the configuration, save the file to disk and it'll load every time you play.

The configuration utility lets you turn off both sound effects and digitized speech. The "silent" play option makes Power Drift perfect for those furtive breaks at the office. When the boss appears unexpectedly, a simple Control-Escape is your quick exit.

I was never able to get Power Drift to operate with my joystick. Technical support at Activision acknowledged the same problem while running Power Drift from a Sound Blaster game card. Power Drift has been tested



Whether you peel rubber through a city, or pound the track in the desert, Power Drift tests your skills.

eliminates disk swapping during game play. Activision recommends removing any memory-resident (TSR, or *terminate and stay resident*) applications before game play to avoid potential system conflicts. First-time users must also configure the program to run on their systems.

The game's setup utility has an "auto-detect" mode for video-adaptor and audio-device sound cards. If you choose your PC's speaker as your

successfully only with the Gravis 3-Speed, Suncom Two-Port, Kraft 25-MHz Programmable, and Kraft 16-MHz Selectable game cards. It doesn't work with my generic game card from Gateway 2000. Serious drivers, however, will find keyboard options easy to manipulate. For example, at maximum speed (240 kilometers/ hour), just work 4 and 6 on the keypad to turn the vehicle left and right. When you're at maximum speed, toggling ➤

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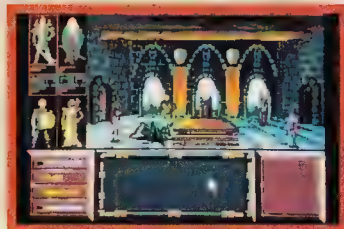
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Drakkhen—the premier title in the Draconian line and the first role playing game that combines FRP themes with the most advanced technical wizardry ever!

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the 5 key shifts you from high to low gear, slowing you down fast.

Digitized sound makes the simulation realistic: Hear the motors rev up at the starting line; listen to the announcer shout the countdown. Hesitate the slightest bit and before you know it, 12 cars have pulled out in front of you.

During the race, on-screen statistics keep you informed of your speed, lap, position, and track stage. You can see the elapsed driving time, your current score, which of 12 drivers is behind the wheel of your vehicle, and whether you're racing in low or high gear. Power Drift also lets you know who's in first, second, and third position. You have only four laps around the track to make it into third place, so don't let up. Sometimes you'll see three or four cars ahead of you, but the stats might indicate you're in second. Don't let the graphics confuse you; the stats at the top of the screen are what count.

Avoid spinouts and sloppy steering at all costs. Wiping out or veering off track is easy because cars travel at fast speeds. Accidents waste precious seconds, because they reduce your speed to zero. You'll have to shift gears to get up to maximum speed.

Other drivers show no mercy, and will leave you far behind as you take the time to learn your way around the track. Stay calm. Use low gear to handle winding curves, but shift into high to give your vehicle the maximum juice it needs to pull ahead.

Power Drift has no learner's mode, no demo to provide helpful racing hints. It also has no save-game mode, so you can't quit a race in midstream and return to it later. If you fumble on the third track in the desert, the program bounces you back to the first track, making you start over.

Power Drift's manual is adequate to get you up and running, but it includes minimal driving tips. You learn from experience, pure and simple.

Don't be surprised if it takes many laps around the track before you can complete a race without hearing the words "Too bad, try again." "Congratulations" and "High score"

are phrases that come only with the sweet smell of victory.

Power Drift is lots of fun — simulated racing entertainment at its best. The courses are quick-paced and wildly addictive. High-quality graphics and arcade-like sound effects keep you on the edge of the driver's seat at every turn. When you're behind the wheel of the fastest car on the track, you can almost hear the frenzied crowds cheering you on to victory.

Activision, 3885 Bohannon Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025, (800) 227-6900, (415) 329-7630; 512K IBM-PC and compatibles; EGA/VGA; keyboard or joystick; DOS 2.1 or higher; Roland, Ad Lib, and Game Blaster sound cards; no copy protection; \$39.95

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI

By Neil Shapiro

Whether or not your favorite legend features a knight in shining armor, a gun-toting cowboy, or a Japanese samurai, the tale is a memorial to a time-honored way of life. Although some people experience these stories of yesteryear through books, others encounter them by using entertainment software.

While Microprose's *Sword of the Samurai* is neither a substitute for a college-level course in Japanese cultural traditions nor a visit to Japan, it brings that part of the world closer to home.

Warriors of the Clan

The game opens in the 16th century and you're a young samurai with a small estate and a few subordinate warriors. As the game progresses you try to become the next *hatamoto* (lieu-

tenant) by positioning yourself in power, wealth, and honor.

Once you're a *hatamoto*, the game challenges you to become the head of your province, the clan's *daimyo*. If you progress even further and overcome even more obstacles, the final challenge of becoming *shogun* — the central warlord of all Japan — looms ahead.

The game's graphics images are well suited to the simulation. On the animated single-combat screen the two fighters with their *katana* swords move in graceful motion. The silhouetted figures on the strategic-combat screens are none other than Japanese troops in action.

Indeed, the game's painstaking attention to graphics design is a rare find. The company has even given the same attention to the manual — it gives a complete history of 16th-century Japan.

Although this game has wonderful graphics and a detailed manual, exciting game play is what makes the game . . . well . . . honorable.

Swing That Katana

Practicing the art of sword-fighting with your teacher is your first task. (And it'll introduce you to the joystick or keyboard control of animated sword fighters.) Although you may end up a crumpled mass, keep practicing. Fighting the real opponents is even more difficult.

Like all young warriors, you'll want to travel. Perhaps your *hatamoto* will call upon you to defend a mountain pass, or maybe one of your compatriots will ask your help defending his lands. Either challenge will add to your honor. Combat takes place on a screen displaying your troops in miniature on varied terrain. You can control each formation by issuing simple commands to set up combat and change the overall formations. *Hoshi* (the arrowhead formation) concentrates your strength for a down-the-middle rampage, while *ganko* spreads out your formations.

Once you set your options you can control the direction each formation ☛



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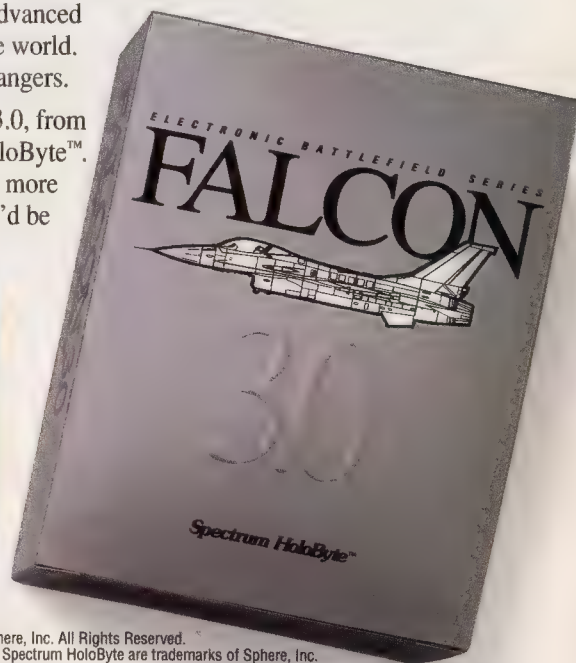
... Nearly blacked out, you ease forward on the stick. The g's drop, and you can see again. There he is! You're on HIS six now. This is going to be sweet. As you get tone you know he's yours.

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travels by using a movable cursor to trace its path. Make the formation turn and march, march straight ahead, or retreat.

When the armies meet, they fight until one side is routed from the field. At the lower levels of play there may be only one or two formations to control. To become Shogun, you'll need to learn to use the combined forces of cavalry and swordsmen, as well as musketeers and warriors, each working in a dozen or more lineups.

As you travel and gain honor through combat you may be waylaid by bandits or chased through a village of angry peasants. On screen, you

superiors may ask you to commit *seppuku*, or ritual suicide. If you have an heir, the game can continue with your son inheriting your estate.

Don't forget to get married, but be careful when you choose a wife. Her social standing and relatives may have a heavy impact on later game play.

Not for Everybody

If you don't enjoy arcade-type games, you won't like *Sword of the Samurai*, because getting to the next stage in the game requires playing through the arcade-like combat sequences.



Sword of the Samurai's warriors swing their katana swords in graceful motion.

have a bird's-eye view of a figure as it moves through a colorful tapestry of roads, rice paddies, and houses. You must throw spears at attacking foes, and sword-fight those who come in close. This is very much an arcade-type sequence.

Another arcade-type combat occurs when you assassinate a rival or kidnap a member of a rival's family. In these screens you must explore your rival's estate. As you move around, more of the hallways, doors, and rooms become visible. Watch out: Your rivals will rush at you, forcing you to resort to the art of the spear and sword.

Sooner or later a rival may capture you, or even end your brief but colorful life. If you really screw up, your

On the other hand, if you're looking for a game to play for a few hours, or just an hour on a day when you want to have a great deal of fun without a lot of bother, this game is for you. Whether I call it a "beer and skittles," or a "skokie and noodles" kind of game, it's certainly one of the best ways I know to spend a gaming afternoon.

Microprose Software Inc., 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030 (301) 771-1151; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/EGA/VGA; keyboard, joystick recommended; supports Ad Lib and Roland sound boards; off-disk copy protection; \$54.95

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

By Cameron Crotty

I was pumped, dudes. I mean, there I was, staring at what appeared to be a most excellent translation of an ultracool cinematic presentation. Everything looked great: The storyline offered opportunities for some pleasantly mild brain strain, coupled with some whacked-out arcade-style action. As Bill S. Preston, Esquire, and Ted (Theodore) Logan, I had to travel through time in Rufus' excellent phone booth, bagging lots of dead dudes, so that I could pass that heinous history project. There were lots of places to visit, all listed in the helpful *Circuits of Time Directory*.

After some minor technical difficulties (bogus!) and some most knowledgeable help from Capstone technical support (excellent!), I examined the startup screens, digitized right out of the movie (whoa!), then proceeded most triumphantly to . . .

Enough. The only thing remotely triumphant about this game is the money Capstone will make off kids who get suckered into buying it based on the movie. The marketing folks even include a color foldout featuring Bill & Ted t-shirts, caps, jackets, backpacks, and so on.

The game begins with Bill, Ted and Rufus' phone booth/time machine. You must help our two heroes round up enough of the historical figures featured in the movie to get an A on their final history report. To do this, you must travel to such places as early 20th-century Germany, early 19th-century France, and late 19th-century America, gathering objects that'll help you along the way. For instance, Sigmund Freud won't come with you unless you give his mom some flowers, ☞

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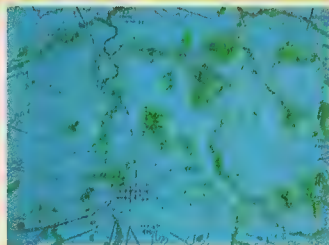
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and Socrates requires an answer to his question.

Your booth can hold only Bill, Ted, and two other "dudes" at a time, so you must drop off these famous personalities at the San Dimas Mall to wait for you. This mall is also where you catch your ride to the school auditorium when you've gathered all your dudes. Even though you have a time machine, you're racing against a timer. In Rufus' words, "The clock is always running in San Dimas."

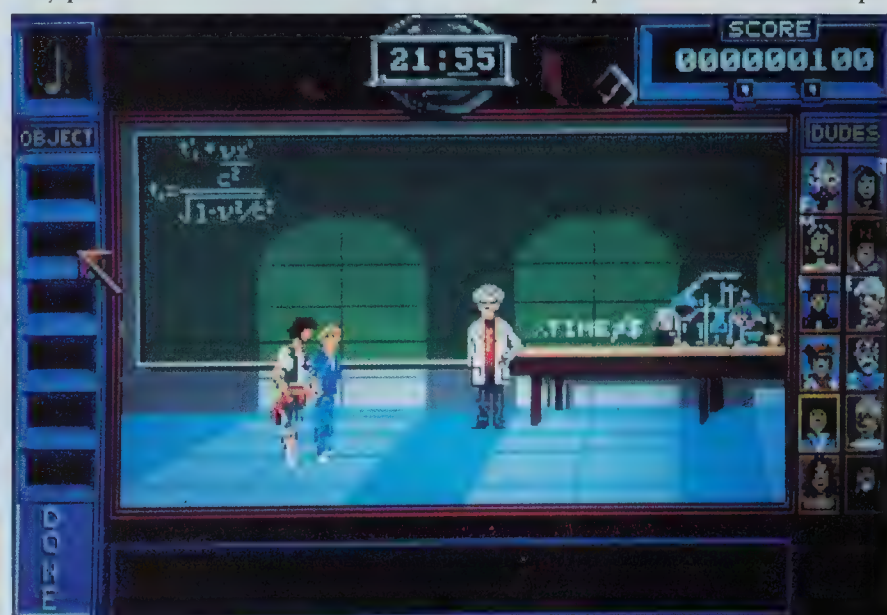
Capstone calls this game "an excellent arcade/action adventure." The only problem is Bill & Ted's Excellent

in their trademark hip-dude shuffle is amusing for a while, but the novelty wears off when you're in the bar trying to figure out if you actually hit the bad guy at the end of your swing.

Climbing the mountain to reach the Oracle at Delphi is no walk in the park either; the paths seem to end suddenly and arbitrarily beneath you, regardless of what it looks like on screen.

I used the keyboard, but I can't imagine a joystick improving matters any, especially because the Capstone techie I talked to claimed he rarely used the joystick.

On an upbeat note, other compa-



Go on a cool adventure with Bill and Ted and help them pass their history project.

Adventure isn't good at either. While the game is set up as an adventure or a quest, implying a certain level of mental stimulation, it amounts to merely a computerized hide-and-seek game. If you find something, pick it up — you're guaranteed to need it somewhere. If you offer all your objects to a dude and he or she still doesn't come with you, you need to find another object.

This lack of challenge puts the burden of greatness on the arcade/action sequences, which are far from inspiring. The graphics are only average, and the play is slow and frustrating. There's little relation between how you manipulate the controls and what your characters do on screen. Watching Bill and Ted slump around

nies should take a hint from Capstone's complete and amusing documentation. The *Circuits of Time Directory* was good for some laughs. Too bad the company didn't encode some clues or vital information in the phone book. Again, the novelty wears off quickly. Do yourselves a favor, dudes: If you hanker for an excellent adventure, rent the movie. It costs a lot less, and you'll have a lot more fun.

Capstone, 14160 South West 139th Court, Miami, FL 33186, (305) 252-9404; 384K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/EGA/VGA (requires 512K)/MCGA (requires 512K)/Tandy 16 color; MS-DOS 2.1 or higher; keyboard, joystick optional; supports Ad Lib sound card; off-disk copy protection; \$39.95

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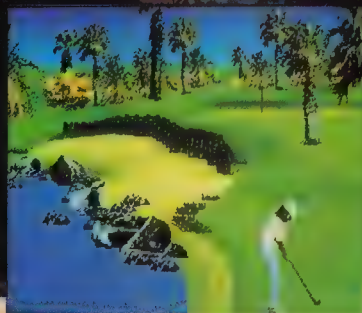
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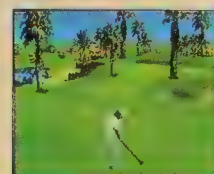
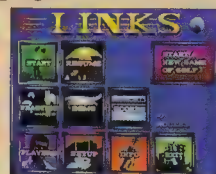
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DAY OF THE VIPER

By James V. Trunzo

"Two tons of titanium and vengeance" — that's the Viper V, an attack android you control via a remote link titled the Nexus 2000 Synergy Console. Designed originally to explore parts of the galaxy too dangerous for humans, now the Viper must save humankind. And you're at the console, directing its every move.

Day of the Viper from Accolade presents gamers with a highly visual, extremely playable scenario. A deranged superdroid named GAR (*genetic android race*), more human than machine, has gone berserk and, over the last 300 years, has been creating a mechanoid race.

Now his robot army has taken control of a vital defense base. To regain control of the base you must recover 25 hidden floppy disks, upload them onto the command-post main computer (if you can find it), and reactivate the security system. All this, of course, while trying to survive the attacks of the robot army and GAR himself . . . well, itself.

Ease of Play

Day of the Viper handles a typical game plot with atypical ease and flair. Your screen (the Nexus 2000 Console) is divided into a number of highly detailed and colorful areas, all accessible with the click of a mouse button or a few simple keystrokes.

One main area depicts a three-dimensional Viper as it traverses the defense base, while the other displays an on-screen map of the area the Viper is exploring. Above, below, and between these sections are a myriad of icon-labeled buttons, gauges, and

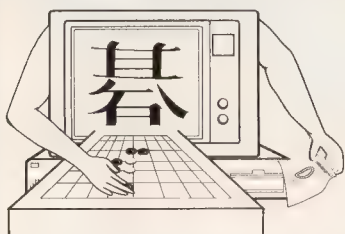
storage boxes that may seem a bit bewildering, but will eventually delight you.

The icon buttons activate your Viper's weaponry, shields, radar, and hard drive; the gauges show your damage level, shield strength, and energy; and the storage boxes hold the essential objects you find scattered about the five-building, 25-level complex that makes up the huge defense base.

These objects range from energy crystals, to shield restorers, to repair chips, to new weaponry. You must find, identify, and use them judiciously if your Viper is to survive and accomplish the task.

Day of the Viper is a well-planned game. From one screen you can access every part of the game. Click on your disk icon, and a computer notebook, part of the Viper's object-management system, pops up, allowing you to log important data. When you store an object in a room (the Viper can only carry ten items at one time) it'll ◊

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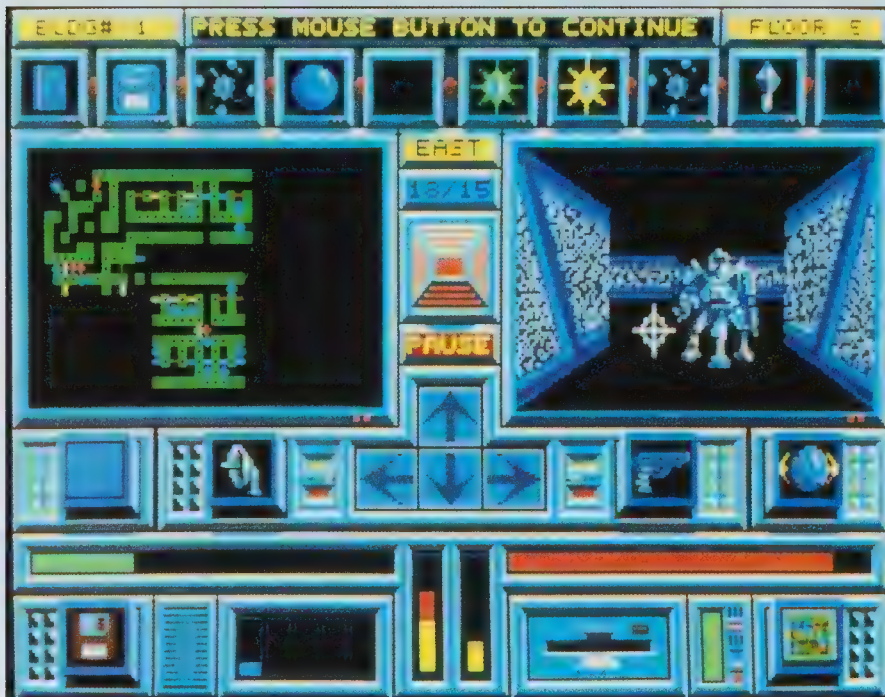
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In Day of the Viper, you control the Viper — an attack android out to destroy GAR and his robots.

remain there until you return to reclaim it.

When you find one of 13 computer

chips (you'll need to find them to maximize your Viper's abilities) click on the chip and your circuit-board

icon to install the new component.

If the Viper's energy is low, or its shields need restoring, click on one of the appropriate pods that rest in a storage box at the top of your console's screen and make your Viper rock and roll.

All elements of the game are easy to operate. Combat, for example, is simply a matter of activating the Viper's weapons and defense system. When your short-range sensor button changes from green to yellow, you know danger is nearby.

When you click on your weapon icon and shield icon, a crosshair appears on your screen, indicating that you're ready for combat.

When the sensor turns red, you'd better check your visual scanner, because you're under attack from one of several directions. Using either a mouse or the arrow keys, move the crosshair and fire at one of 33 different enemy robots, each with its own weak spot, type of attack, damage capability, and defense. The more you know about your enemy, the better you'll perform.

A Star Performance

Although the program's storyline is simple, the wide variety of enemies, weapons, and tasks make the game far from boring. Also, by making gamers "search" for the disks and computer chips, Accolade has made the game more than a straight move-and-shoot arcade adventure.

While some repetitiveness does creep into this game, this addition to the Robotech game genre is far from "terminal." With its high-tech setting and storyline, elegant user interface, stunning graphics and sound, Accolade's newest game makes for a captivating play.

Accolade, 550 South Winchester Boulevard, San Jose, CA 95128, (408) 985-1700; 512K IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles; CGA/VGA/EGA/Hercules/Tandy 16-color; keyboard, joystick, mouse recommended; supports Ad Lib and CMS sound boards; off-disk copy protection; \$49.95 □

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PLAYING THE GAME

Let the Adventure Continue

by Neil Shapiro

If you're like me, you like to really get into your games. You like to experience all the detail and depth that the best software designers can cram into a dynamite game.

It's more than just wanting to finish or to win the game. It's wanting to play the game in the same sense that a Formula One competitor wants to drive a car, or the captain of a battleship wants to steer a boat, or a world-class mountain climber wants to go for a hike in the woods.

Pushing the Envelope

Heading for the limit with the pedal to the metal — that's where a truly dedicated game player directs his or her efforts, squeezing every last drop of fun, excitement, and knowledge out of every gaming experience, no matter what genre you're talking about.

The purpose of this column will be to help you make this journey every month on one or more select, worthwhile games.

We'll take you on trips in adventure games to places you might otherwise never visit. We'll help you formulate strategy in complex

simulations that even top players don't find out about right away.

And we'll take a look at hint books and tell you which come closest to being worth the money. (Some come pretty close, but we're talking about some heavy price points here — just one more reason not to make a mistake when you buy one.)

We'll take a look at the pros and cons of using the popular utility programs — what some people call "cheat" programs and others simply think of as useful accessories. We'll do everything we can to add a whole slew of different facets to your gaming enjoyment.

Audience Participation

We'll also be looking for your input, your ideas, and your methods of play.

Each month I'll be searching for — and publishing here — the best hints, tips, techniques, and observations from you, the readers of *PCGames* magazine. Please write in and help me to make this an interactive and exciting area. If you're a real player (with a capital *P-L-A-Y*), make this column your first stop every month. You'll be well rewarded.

Early Retirement?

What's the worst thing about computer gaming —

I mean other than that big blister on the side of your thumb?

If you're like me, the gloomiest moments come when you've finally used up a game, done everything you think you can do with it, and must retire it to the Closet of Boredom.

A long time ago, I laid an old friend to rest in that closet — *Flight Simulator II* and a couple of its scenery disks. As near as I can determine, everyone who has ever owned a PC has also owned and played that game at one time. At least it seems that way from the best-seller charts.

Make the Game Last

Yet how often can you just land over and over again — or even navigate from one airport to the next? While the scenery disks are interesting, the game just seems like more of the same after a while.

Good news — I found an interesting book called *A Flight Simulator Odyssey*, by Charles Gulick (Compute! Books, 1989, \$14.95.), and I think it deserves to be widely known. It's brought *Flight Simulator II* back to life for me, and I think it can do so for you.

Open Your Eyes

Odyssey gives you hints on such things as landing and air-speed control, plus gen-

eral tips on using the game, but that's not the book's main thrust. What *Odyssey* brings to light is the concept of using the scenario disks to see things you've never seen before, fly in ways you've never flown before, and generally to experience the simulation in new and wonderful ways.

Most of the book's scenarios present you with a set of coordinates at which to set the game — including such items as the latitude and the longitude of the aircraft, its altitude, its heading, the time of day, and so on.

Each chapter of the book focuses on a different scenery disk and contains a number of different scenarios to use with that disk.

Don't Miss It

While I haven't yet flown more than a dozen or so missions from the book, I've already found two I've flown over and over. They illustrate the two main ways in which Charles Gulick, the author, approaches his writing and research task for each scenario.

The first scenario I'd like to recommend can be found in the chapter on the game's Western Europe scenery disk.

I always suspected I was missing something there — and the *Chalk Giants* scenario really opened my eyes. I missed those huge chalk figures of a man in a

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soon as you've completed three *tiny* trials.

Among other things, you'll need to sedate some piranha poodles, burglarize the governor's mansion, and do business with the scum of the earth. And if that's not enough, you'll have to figure out whether the 300-pound voodoo priestess covets your rubber chicken, fetid fish, pack of breath mints, or...

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Lucasfilm Games set today's graphic standards with games like *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Now *The Secret of Monkey Island* ups the standards a few more notches with stunning 256-color VGA graphics (16-color EGA version also available), proportionally scaled animated characters, and cinematic pans and camera angles.

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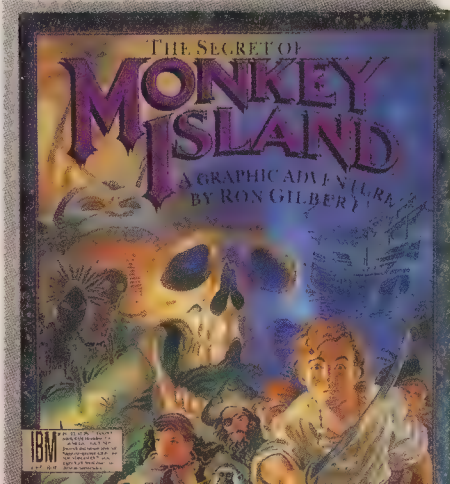
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doorway, a giant horse, and a lion every time I used that disk.

Gulick's directions make the sketches very easy to find, and he includes a brief historical explanation of what they might have been, along with various other facts associated with these 18th-century figures best seen from the air.

Up and Away

There's another scenario called *The Lone Eagle*, simulating Charles Lindbergh's historic flight to Paris. In this scenario, Gulick doesn't so much uncover a new place to go as make you suddenly feel different about what's going on — all through excellent prose and imagery.

Gulick begins, "Imagine,

if you can, that you're in the cockpit, not of your Cessna or Piper, but of the *Spirit of St. Louis*. That being the case, you can see nothing ahead because your aircraft is equipped only with side windows; you'd have to stick your head out of one of them, or yaw the airplane left or right, to see Le Bourget Airport out there just below the horizon."

Renewal

If you've ever enjoyed playing Flight Simulator II, if you have an interest in reawakening that program's enjoyment for yourself, or even if you're just starting out with the program and don't want to miss a thing — I recommend this book strongly.

You can take a good game

like Flight Simulator, extend its value, and make the good times last.

Hello Out There

I always like to write in an informal style, but in this column, I'd like to take it one step further. I'd like all of us to begin a two-way dialogue.

I'm a pretty good gamer, but I can't uncover all the techniques, all the hidden passwords, all the challenges, solutions, ideas, and just plain fun things to do that all of you out there have found on your own.

So drop me a line today and let me know what you've found or what you're hoping to find. The address is Neil Shapiro, c/o Playing the Game, P.O. Box 520, Bethpage, NY 11714. You

can also reach me on line at CompuServe: 76703,401.

Send in your best gaming techniques and I'll publish them here with your name attached and share them with all of our readers.

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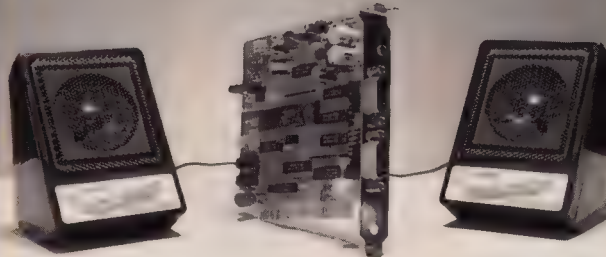
Andy Warhol once said that everyone will eventually be famous for at least 15 minutes — so here's your chance to be famous for two whole months.

I'd like this hints column to develop into a lively community of discussion and sharing. It can only add to gaming enjoyment for all of us, so write to me at the address noted above.

That's it for this first month — we'll look for you gathered around the magazine again next issue. □

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CONNECTING POINT

Hidden Treasures

By George Fontaine

As my computer screen unveiled a beautiful scene of zebras running wild in an African desert, I realized that my software collection had been missing something. Who would have guessed that the public-domain artwork I found on line would give my games a whole new dimension?

I never used to pay attention to the wide variety of graphic art available on commercial services and BBSes. I figured most of it was either junk or cheap advertisements for no-name products. Boy, was I wrong.

In recent years, there's been an upswing in the quality and availability of computer art. Today's computers, equipped with high-quality graphics displays, are no longer too costly for the average consumer.

Now even high-quality scanners have entered the marketplace. This new breed of technology has opened a lot of doors for would-be computer artists and other users looking for high-quality artwork.

In Search of . . .

Without reaching farther than your modem to call your favorite BBS or commercial service, you can discover beautiful computer

art and images in about any form. On most of these systems, you'll find versions of your favorite cartoon characters, scanned images of scenery and animals, and original free-hand art on a variety of subject matters.

Several years ago now, CompuServe tried to adopt a graphics-interchange standard so that all machines—including both the Macintosh and the IBM PC—could share the same graphics. That idea took hold, and now you'll find most graphic-art files available in CompuServe's GIF and RLE formats. That standard isn't reflected throughout the entire industry, however, so you'll probably still find files in unusual formats.

When you're looking for graphics files on a BBS or a commercial system, filenames usually include an extension such as *GIF* (pronounced *jif*), *RLE*, *MAC*, *PCX*, *PIC*, and so on. For example, *ZEBRAS.GIF* is a graphics file with an image portraying zebras in CompuServe's GIF format.

Take a Look

Because there's no true standard when it comes to creating graphics files with the multitude of paint programs and scanners available currently, you'll need a graphics-viewer program that can recognize the popular and not-so-popular

graphics-file formats. A number of good shareware programs can sort out the good from the mediocre.

One of the more popular graphics viewers is **CompuShow** (CSHOW), written by Bob Berry of Canyon State Systems and Software. CompuShow supports and displays all major graphics file formats, including GIF, RLE, MAC, PCX, and PIC.

To the Test

When you start CSHOW, it begins by retrieving, sorting, and displaying your files from any directory or disk you choose. You can select graphics files for display by either typing the filename or moving a highlight bar around the file-directory screen.

Once you select a file, CSHOW analyzes it and presents an information box that tells you about the graphics files (image sizes, colors, and so on) and the available display options. You can then make the image come into view with a single keystroke from the information box.

You can display an image in any mode your system supports. For example, a VGA adapter can support CGA, EGA, MCGA, and VGA modes. You can also tell CSHOW to automatically use the best display mode available, based on size and number of colors in the image.

After you've viewed the image, return to the graphics information box where you can tell CSHOW once again to display the image in a different mode, or return to the disk-directory screen to select another file for viewing.

CSHOW offers some unique features, such as the ability to pan images that are too big to fit on one screen, and to colorize and adjust the the brightness of any monochrome image.

More Perks

Register the product, and you'll receive an enhanced version of CSHOW that will let you make hardcopies of your favorite images on a variety of printers. You can even create your own slide shows, too.

For more information about CompuShow, contact Bob Berry at Canyon State Systems and Software, P.O. Box 86, Sedona, AZ 86336. Or you can send E-mail to CompuServe (76555,167), GENie (R.BERRY7), or InterNet (76555.167@compuserve.com).

Whether your interest in computer artwork lies in using it to enhance your own creations or simply in appreciating its esthetic value, you're sure to find a wide variety of beautiful images on line. So what are you waiting for? Start scouring the on-line art world today. □



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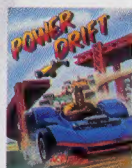
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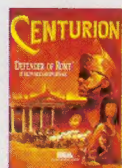
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System requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible with 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, CGA, EGA, or monochrome graphics adaptor, and headset or external speaker.

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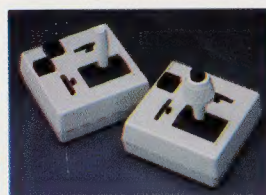
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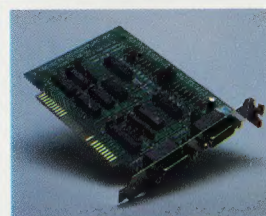
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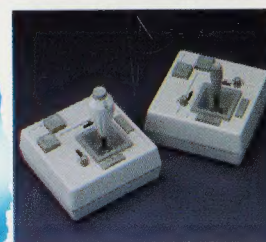
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